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ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: REFORMER  
OF PREACHING AND PREACHER OF REFORM

by

Alger Morton Fitch, Jr.

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## DOCTOR OF RELIGION

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## INTRODUCTION

Just inside the South entrance porch at Nashville's Thomas W. Phillips Memorial building which houses the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, one sees inscribed in stone these words composed by Eva Jean Wrather for the Fine Arts and Inscriptions Committee:<sup>1</sup>

### DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

" " " "

EARLY IN THE NINETEENTH  
CENTURY, IN THE LAND OF THE  
WESTERN WATERS, A NEW CHRISTIAN  
MOVEMENT WAS BORN

IMPELLED BY CONVICTION  
THAT GOD COULD REQUIRE OF THIS  
HIGHLY FAVORED NEW WORLD  
NOTHING LESS THAN A THOROUGH  
REFORMATION IN ALL THINGS  
CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS,

ITS PIONEERS, MEN OF THE  
ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT OF THE NEW  
AGE OF FREEDOM AND ENLIGHT-  
ENMENT, HELD THESE TRUTHS  
TO BE SELF-EVIDENT:

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<sup>1</sup>Claude E. Spencer, Ronald E. Osborn and Howard E. Short.

THAT MEN ARE ENDOWED BY  
GOD WITH EQUAL RIGHTS TO THINK  
AND ACT FOR THEMSELVES IN ALL  
MATTERS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF  
AND PRACTICE:

THAT A DIVIDED CHURCH  
IS SIN AND THE SPIRIT OF LOVE AND  
UNITY, LIBERTY AND CONCORD, IS TO  
BE RESTORED BY CASTING OFF THE  
SHACKLES OF HUMAN TRADITIONS  
AND RETURNING TO THE ORIGINAL  
FAITH AND ORDER OF THE CHURCH  
OF CHRIST:

THAT BELIEF IN JESUS THE  
CHRIST AND OBEDIENCE TO HIM AS  
LORD IS THE ONLY TEST OF CHRIS-  
TIAN CHARACTER AND THE ONLY  
BOND OF CHRISTIAN UNION

What truths stone-cutters have chiseled permanently into the rock of this research library Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) had engraved deeply into the convictions of these reformers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who were known collectively as Christian Churches, Churches of Christ or Disciples of Christ. Many implements were used by him in hewing out the message of Christian unity by a return to apostolic practice--a religious journal, a Christian college, a debate platform, a modern translation of the New Testament. A most effective instrument he used for the "Plea" of catholic and primitive Christianity was that of preaching. Campbell's preaching left a lasting and deep impression upon even difficult places, trying conditions and rock-hard skeptics. He affirmed that "there is more proof in a spoken, than in a written gospel," for

an oral delivery contains "all the warmth and power of the human voice" and the "additional testimony of the preacher himself."<sup>2</sup>

In our time there is an ascending interest in the person of Alexander Campbell, in the place of preaching and in the concept of church renewal. This dissertation seeks to relate all three topics, viewing Alexander Campbell as a reformer of preaching and a preacher of reform (i.e., renewal "of sinners, of Christians, and of religious institutions.")<sup>3</sup>

Difficulties long have been recognized in recovering Campbell as a preacher. Mrs. Campbell, regretting that her husband "never desired or thought it important to have his discourses printed," claimed to know of only three in print: (1) the "Sermon on the Law" (2) the "Justification and Coronation of the Messiah" and (3) the "Riches of Christ."<sup>4</sup> Few sermons are extant and even of these we must ask: Are they representative? Except for the last sermon, which was written for D. S. Burnett's paper The Christian Preacher (1836), the others were written after

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<sup>2</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Missionary Society, No. I," M. H., Vol. VII, No. II (February, 1850), p. 75.

<sup>3</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters to England--No. VIII," M. H., Vol. II, No. IV (April, 1838), p. 181.

<sup>4</sup>Selina Huntington Campbell, Home Life and Reminiscences of A. Campbell by His Wife (St. Louis: John Burns 1882), p. 124.

delivery, and sometimes much later. Are these recalled accurately, since no notes were used in his extemporaneous style? Since Campbell found records by students of his college lectures, when placed in print, proved to be "naked, meagre, and consequently, inadequate,"<sup>5</sup> would he think better of W. K. Pendleton's attempt to print his father-in-law's New Year sermon of 1851 ("The Proper Use of Time") from recollection and a lifetime acquaintance with his style?<sup>6</sup>

The situation is not as hopeless as it sounds. Campbell wrote extensively for a lifetime and said much about preaching. He lectured, debated and gave addresses on a host of themes; and the relation between preparing and delivering a speech on a secular theme is suggestive regarding a sermon on a religious subject. Contemporaries in private correspondence<sup>7</sup> and the public press<sup>8</sup> tell of

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<sup>5</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Editorial Notices," M. H., Vol. I, No. II (February, 1851), p. 113.

<sup>6</sup>"Our New Year's Gift," M. H., Vol. I, No. II (February, 1851), pp. 85-96.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas Chalmers, J. W. McGarvey, Frances Trollope, and Heman Humphrey as quoted in M. H..

<sup>8</sup>For example, in Cincinnati alone, Campbell's speaking is referred to by such papers as the Advertiser and Ohio Phoenix, Catholic Telegraph, Cincinnati Chronicle, Cross and Baptist Journal, Daily Gazette, Western Christian Advocate, Whig and Intelligencer and the Philanthropist. (These papers may be found in either the Cincinnati Public Library, that of the Ohio State Historical Society or the University of Cincinnati.)

Campbell's preaching. He, himself, places in his periodicals full sermons by others<sup>9</sup> which impressed him, as well as short messages by himself. Some of these he calls by the term "sermon"--i.e., "Sermons on Prayer--No. I,"<sup>10</sup> "Short Sermons for Business Men--No. 8,"<sup>11</sup> etc.. Many articles in over forty years of editorial labor do not carry the word "sermon," but are certainly little different from what Campbell might teach to a Sunday morning church assembly. Besides, the biography of Campbell, as well as the periodicals by Campbell, give many sermon outlines he used with comments on their development. Campbell's book, Familiar Lectures on the Pentateuch, contains a section entitled "Extracts from President Campbell's Sermons."<sup>12</sup>

More encouraging now than even the references to

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<sup>9</sup>For example, "A Discourse Delivered in the Church at Bethany, Va., Oct. 17th, by James M. Macrum, of Pittsburgh" M. H., Vol. II, No. I (January, 1859), p. 23 ff. or "Sermons of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon: The Glorious Habitation," M. H., Vol. VI, No. IX (September, 1863), p. 385.

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Short Sermons on Christian Practice," M. H., Vol. III, No. IV (May, 1839), pp. 204-207.

<sup>11</sup>Alexander Campbell, M. H., Vol. III, No. XI (November, 1860), p. 673 ff.

<sup>12</sup>Alexander Campbell, Familiar Lectures on the Pentateuch by Alexander Campbell Delivered before the Morning Class of Bethany College, During the Session of 1859-60. Also Short Extracts from his Sermons during the same Session reported by Chas. V. Segar, Phonographer to which is prefixed a Brief Sketch of President Campbell's Life. Edited, with an Introduction and Occasional Notes, by W. T. Moore. (Cincinnati: H. S. Bosworth, Publisher, 1867) p. 305ff



Campbell's preaching by his contemporaries, or to Campbell's references to preaching in his various books and periodicals, are the newly found manuscripts that Campbell's daughter, Decima Barclay, had taken to Adelaide, South Australia.<sup>13</sup> Manuscripts E and F each contain Campbell's notes for thirteen sermons; and manuscript D and No. 332 each hold thirty-four sermons; in addition there are records regarding when, where and what was preached while Campbell was just out of his teen years.

Why is this dissertation being written? Alexander Campbell was in his own right a major religious figure on the American scene. The unity movement he championed in his day foreshadowed the present ecumenical concern. His co-laborers in this unity movement, since its inception, have stressed the vital place of preaching in the life of the church. The above-mentioned newly-discovered materials make possible a fresh look at and a more comprehensive study of Campbell's sermonic views. The last work in the area of Campbell's preaching concept was made by Granville T. Walker in 1954.<sup>14</sup>

Through a re-examination of old sources and a critical study of new ones, we propose to re-evaluate Campbell's

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<sup>13</sup>See the author's "Recent Developments in the Study of Alexander Campbell," in the Christian Standard, Vol. C, No. XI (March 13, 1965), pp. 3,4.

<sup>14</sup>Granville T. Walker, Preaching in the Thought of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1954).

preaching and rediscover those relevant and lasting insights which bring renewal to Christ's church in any age. We intend to demonstrate that Alexander Campbell not only proved to be an efficient preacher of reform, he presented to the world a reform for preaching.

Our efforts will be divided into two distinct parts. Part One, though illustrating from Campbell's own preaching experiences, will be an over-all view of Campbell's proposed reforms in preaching. After a consideration of the status of preaching at his time, in contrast to the ideal for preaching in apostolic times; the further chapters will look to Campbell's understanding regarding apostolic concepts of preaching, preachers, audiences, and sermons. The second part will view Campbell's life as a preacher. In four chapters, we will review his background, ministry, sermons and influence.

## **PART ONE: ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: REFORMER OF PREACHING**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **NEEDS AND NORMS**

##### **An Historical Look at the Preaching Situation**

Preachers not only preach, they hear preaching. Having in their own minds a concept of what constitutes a "good sermon," they are generally more critical than others in the church regarding what they hear from the pulpit. Alexander Campbell was no exception. He had unwavering convictions as to what the sermon should be. He had uninhibited reactions to what passed for preaching in his time.

On the one hand he responded negatively to the revivalistic sermons heard on the American frontier. Equally so, he chilled under the cold theologies of the past that were served to hungering sheep by shepherds more loyal to the party-line than to the apostolic and prophetic-word.

The former--preachers of the Great Revival--fired up the feelings of their hearers; if they did not build up their Biblical knowledge. Facts and evidence could firm up confidence. Emotional appeals could only stir up tears or ejaculations. In the South, especially among the Baptists with whom Campbell early associated, many considered emotional excitement as "the evidence, if not the very essence of religion."<sup>1</sup> Campbell recalled:

I have seen other preachers who can strike fire no other way than by the friction of their hands, and an occasional clap, resembling a peal of distant thunder. In this holy paroxysm of clapping, rubbing, sneezing, and roaring, the mind is fairly on the way, and the tongue in full gallup, which like a race horse, runs the swifter the less weight it carries....They can neither speak to God nor man in the pulpit to purpose, as they think, unless when, like the boiler of a steam boat, they are almost ready to burst.<sup>2</sup>

On one occasion in New York Campbell heard the man

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, Embracing A View of the Origin, Progress and Principles of the Religious Reformation which He Advocated (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1897), Vol. I, p. 487. Because of the many references to this work, hereafter the abbreviation Memoirs shall be used.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermons to Young Preachers, No. I," The Christian Baptist (Buffalo, Brooke County, Virginia: A. Campbell, ed.), Vol. VII, No. II (September 7, 1829), p. 46. For a description of emotional preaching and its effects at Cane Ridge, Kentucky see John Rogers, The Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone, Written By Himself: With Additions and Reflections. By Elder John Rogers (Cincinnati: J. A. and U. P. James, 1847), pp. 30-64. Because of the many references in this dissertation to Campbell's Christian Baptist, hereafter the abbreviation C. B. shall be used.

who converted Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875). He described Samuel Dickinson Burchard (1812-1891) as

...impassioned in his oratory, illogical in much of his reasoning, and extremely hazardous in his quotations and applications of scripture--vehement, boisterous, and declamatory, he compels his audience to be prayed for, and will have them on the penitential benches whether or not. Like a tornado in passing through the country, he upturns everything that can be moved.<sup>3</sup>

The case for Christianity in all its reasonableness could be addressed to the mind of man with no need for convulsions or contortions, swoonings or trances. The necessity of the hour was a rational examination of Divinely-given evidence and not revivalism's emotional orgies. Campbell's unbending resistance to the "warm preaching," "uninspired harangues," and "enthusiasm" of the revivals caused charges to be brought against him as a denier of the Holy Spirit and "experimental religion." This he disavowed<sup>4</sup> and argued that being filled with the Spirit and led by the Spirit were not the equivalent of

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<sup>3</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to the North-East--No. VI," The Millennial Harbinger (Bethany, Virginia: A. Campbell), Vol. VII, No. X (October, 1836), p. 508. Because of the many references to this work, hereafter the abbreviation M. H. shall be used.

<sup>4</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Address to the Readers of the Christian Baptist," C. B., Vol. I, No. VI (January 5, 1824), p. 115.

being filled with ignorance regarding Scripture and led astray by our feelings. He wrote:

Ignorance is often the mother of enthusiasm or superstition, either of which is, with many, equivalent to devotion. Many of those unlettered divines who are supposed to speak entirely from the Spirit, for everyone knows it is not from a fund of knowledge or from literary attainments which they possess, are indeed as evidently without the grace of God as his holiness the pope or his grace the duke of York. They speak from the spirit, but it is from the spirit of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is frequently accompanied with a remarkable volubility of speech and pathos of expression. There are none more eloquent nor more ungrammatical than the enthusiastic. Indeed, some writers on eloquence of the highest order say that this kind of eloquence is the creature of enthusiastic ardore. Thousands of ignorant unlettered men, not fettered by the rules of grammar, not circumscribed by the restraints of reason, nor controlled by the dictates of common sense, nor limited by the written word of God, are nevertheless both fluent, and, though incorrect, eloquent speakers they are elevated by enthusiasm and like the meteors of the night, shine with more resplendence than the real stars.<sup>5</sup>

Observation showed that summer would be followed by winter and that the revival heat, based on emotional fever rather than on reason and revelation, would be turned into coldness. There was evidence of no root in those who were converted to either their own feelings or to a phantom,

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<sup>5</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Clergy--No. IV," C. B., Vol. I, No. VI (January 5, 1824), pp. 108-109.

rather than to Christ through understanding.<sup>6</sup>

Where behind one sacred desk might stand a revivalist relating his own subjective experiences by one anecdote after another; in a different pulpit the other extreme might be represented by a denominationalist defending his own sect's definitions by one proof-text after another.

Metaphysics and theology were to Campbell inadequate substitutes for the gospel of Christ. Treating the Bible as a volume of proof-texts to be martialed to the support of church tenets or creedal affirmations, was mistreating the Scripture. If the Bible was to reprove, rebuke, correct and instruct the church, the church would need to listen to the written word in its fulness and not to select only what appeared to say "amen" to the preacher's own statement of faith.

Listening with other auditors to a Presbyterian clergyman in Iowa, Campbell lamented over the discourse:

If true as mathematics, it was as cold as zero, and as inoperative as fluxions, or as the differential and integral Calculus. I know not whether my sympathies for the preacher or for the hearers predominated. But certainly I sympathized with both.

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<sup>6</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Preacher--No. III" M. H., Vol. III, No. V (May 2, 1832), p. 234.

<sup>7</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour in Iowa," M. H., Vol. I, No. I, (January, 1858), p. 24.

The popular method of preaching from a text received the blame for lay ignorance of the Scripture and clerical proclamation of party doctrine. The people were bewildered rather than enlightened by the "modern moral philosophers and Christian Doctors" who were little more than "retailers of scraps."<sup>8</sup> Instead of discussing a subject in the light of the whole Bible, they took a text--oftentimes a verse or a portion of a verse--sometimes but three words. On such a limited base the preaching of two or three hours followed with no reference to the context or to the Biblical author's purpose.

To use a text for a "motto,"<sup>9</sup> and then to proceed by preaching the opinions of a council or the subjective experiences of one's own life, was to call on the congregation to suffer their faith to rest not in the wisdom of God but in the wisdom of men.<sup>10</sup> By divorcing text from context and following outworn hermeneutical principles, "textuaries" made passages of Scripture teach anything the pulpiteer desired. Spiritualizing verses and indulging in

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<sup>8</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Practical Thoughts and Reflections," M. H., Vol. V, No. III (March, 1848), p. 146. A contributor to the Millennial Harbinger signing himself THOMAS tells that his preacher in nine years explained to him one hundred eight texts "equal to two chapters in Matthew" (December, 1833), p. 589.

<sup>9</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Review of a Sermon," C. B., Vol. III, No. VIII (March 6, 1826), p. 156.

<sup>10</sup>A point made by Campbell in a sermon on Matthew 11: 27 preached in Brush Run (Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 375).



mystical flights of the imagination did not inform the hearers what the Bible said, but let them join in following the futile meanderings of a dark and "foolish mind." Such a preacher was not preaching Christ but himself. Saying what one pleased, and placing it all to the account of a detached sentence previously read, was not speaking where the Scriptures spoke and being silent where they were silent.

The meaning of "textuary" or "textual preaching" must be learned from Campbell's understanding of the word "text." He stated:

I do not know whether we ought to agree with those lexicographers who make the Roman textus a term equivalent to the Grecian ploke, a weaving. Some may justify this etymological interpretation, because, they may suppose, that there is an analogy between the making of a web from thread, and the weaving of a sermon from a few detached words, called a text. I would rather derive the term text directly from the Greek verb texto, to beget or bring forth, from which texos or textus might be ingeniously formed, and this might be translated an egg, or something pregnant with life, which by the laws of nature might become a living animal, as a text by the laws of sermonizing easily becomes a full grown sermon.<sup>11</sup>

Campbell often directed a Disciple's attention to the ignorance of the Bible that stemmed from the practice of "text-preaching."

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<sup>11</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Texts and Textuary Divines," C. B., Vol. II, No. X (May 2, 1825), p. 189.

He wrote in 1824:

But you who occupy the pulpit, are the very persons who are to blame for the incapacity. This useless and senseless way of talking which you call preaching, into which the old pagans led you, is the very way to make the people ignorant, to confound, perplex, and stupify them. This everlasting sermonizing, what good is it? It resembles nothing that is rational in all the compass of thought. A B professes to teach arithmetic; he gets a class of forty boys from 12 to 15 years old, we shall say. He tells them to meet once-a-week and he will give them a lecture or a sermon on some important point in this useful science. The first day he lectures on the cube room for an hour. They sit bookless and thoughtless, heedless, and, perhaps often drowsy, while he harangues them. He blesses them and sends them home, to return a week hence. They meet. His text is arithmetical progression. He preaches an hour; dismisses as usual. The third day of the meeting up comes vulgar fractions; the fourth, rule of three, the fifth, addition; the sixth, notation; the seventh, cube root again, &c. &c. (sic). Now in this way, I hesitate not to say, he might proceed seven years and not finish one accountant. Whoever thought that a science or an art could be taught this way! And yet this is the only way, I may say, universally adopted of teaching the Christian religion. And so it is that many men have sat under the sound gospel (as they call it) for forty years that cannot expound one chapter in the whole New Testament. And yet these same Christians would think it just to prosecute by civil law that teacher who would keep their sons four or five years at English grammar or arithmetic, who receive their money, and yet not one of their sons able<sup>12</sup> to expound one rule in syntax or arithmetic.

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander Campbell, "A Familiar Dialogue, Between the Editor and a Clergyman," Part I C. B., Vol. I, No. XII (June 5, 1824), pp. 234-235.

What would we think of a teacher of grammar or arithmetic, who, after spending seven, seventeen, or twenty-seven years in teaching his pupils those sciences, should afterwards express a great fear of their reading any treatise on those same sciences?<sup>13</sup>

In 1853 he was found still pressing the same point and following the same illustration.

Not one Rabbi in one thousand, either intends or expects his church ever to graduate in Christian learning, or in the knowledge of the Christian Scriptures. "Ever learning, but never able to arrive at the knowledge" of the Christian text-book, seems to be the doom and destiny of every community that lives and dies under the textuary theologues of the 19th century. The five points, or the thirty-nine articles, may be taught and learned in Sunday schools or churches; but what church in any community understands Paul to the Romans, or Paul to the Hebrews?--! If Methuselah were to live again his nine hundred, sixty and nine years, and to spend them all in one community, under the textuary system of the best Protestant sectary amongst us, listening to him as our auditors do in Protestant Churches, could he say, "I understand the volume?"<sup>14</sup>

In setting forth principles and objects for the healing of divisions among Christians, the Reformer called for a restoration of the terms of the Bible,

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<sup>13</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Prefatory Remarks," C. B., Vol. II, No. I (August 2, 1824), p. 3.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Church Edification: an Address delivered before the Kentucky Convention, held at Harrodsburg, Ky. September 28, 1853" in M. H., Vol. III, No. X (October, 1853), p. 552.

the treatment of the Bible as a book of history, the use of the Bible in the place of creeds, and fourthly--but, in our point of inquiry, first--

The reading and expounding of the sacred scriptures in public assemblies instead of text preaching, sermonizing, and philosophizing ....This scheme has filled the pulpit with a race of pigmies in the Bible as diminutive as ever lived.<sup>15</sup>

Was there an alternative to bare emotionalism on the one hand and on the other to the dignified dullness of a "dry, formal, philosophical, and speculative sermonizing, falsely called preaching the gospel?"<sup>16</sup> Instead of the textuary system that allowed for both unsatisfactory types of preaching, Campbell proposed a return to the Bible for the manner<sup>17</sup> as well as the matter of proclamation. Other books besides the Bible influenced Campbell, but not as consciously. Other Biblical books besides Luke's Acts of the Apostles were guides to his preaching, yet not as predominantly.

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<sup>15</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Synopsis of Reformation Principles and Objects. Chapter I," M. H., Vol. I, No. XII (December, 1837), pp. 532-533.

<sup>16</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Practical Thoughts and Reflections," M. H., Vol. IV, No. III (March, 1847), p. 153.

<sup>17</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Practical Thoughts and Reflections," M. H., Vol. III, No. V (May, 1846), p. 283; "The Christian Missionary Society--No. I," M. H., Vol. VII, No. II (February, 1850), p. 75.

Robert Richardson, for example, noted a memorandum of 1809 where young Campbell had copied from Dr. Beattie's Ethics six rhetorical principles "necessary to attain excellence in the composing and pronouncing of sermons." Campbell's biographer stated that he inserted these rules because his subject seemed "to have been impressed by their justness, and to have modeled himself by them in his future course as a preacher."<sup>18</sup> This may have been true of Campbell unconsciously. Yet, on later occasions, Campbell was the first to remind the people that he underwent many unexpected reformations when he set out to make the Bible alone his standard. In recalling an early sermon he preached (June, 1811), he remarked:

We were all Pedobaptists, and in our mode of preaching and teaching more textuary and formal than we have since learned is either scriptural or advantageous to speaker or hearer.<sup>19</sup>

If Protestants generally looked to Augustine or the schoolmen for homiletical style, Disciples of Christ were to look beyond these to Old and New Testament models. Deuteronomy was a series of sermons by Moses to the Jews and exemplified the simple but full relating of God's

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<sup>18</sup> Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 138.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Humble Beginnings," M. H., Vol. VI, No. I (January, 1842), p. 5.

doings and man's actions during the wilderness experience of forty years, plus the arguments, exhortations and applications drawn from these facts. Ezra and Nehemiah's example of speaking to a people in captivity was instructive to reformers leading people out of a later "Babylonian" captivity.<sup>20</sup> Christ, certainly, was a master preacher; and his method of teaching<sup>21</sup> was a major concern of those who would teach others. That Jesus was not a theoretical but a practical preacher was the burden of Campbell's sermon on the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>22</sup> Richardson reflected Campbell's insight when he wrote of Christ's sermon:

...we perceive that he did not, like modern theologians, commence his religious teachings by laying down definitions and prescribing articles of faith. He does not begin by saying that God is a being "without body or parts," neither does he deliver propositions concerning "original sin," or "free-will," or set himself to regulate "Rites, Ceremonies and Sacraments." On the contrary, he begins by pronouncing a blessing upon the "poor in spirit;" upon the "mourner," and upon the "meek," upon those who "hunger and thirst" for righteousness;" upon the "merciful;" the "pure in heart;" the "peace-makers," and the

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<sup>20</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Word to the Moral Regenerators of this Age," M. H., Vol. II, No. VI (August 5, 1833), pp. 380-381.

<sup>21</sup>In a sermon on Matthew 16:13-20 Campbell makes Jesus' manner of teaching the first half of the discourse. See "Notes on a Tour To Eastern Virginia--No. II," M. H., Vol. VI, No. III (March, 1856), p. 136.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 138-139.

"persecuted. He instructs his disciples to "let their light so shine before men that they may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven." He teaches them to act like children of God, in loving their enemies, doing good to those that hated them, and in praying for their persecutors. He delivers throughout rules of life and conduct;--heart-teachings; heart-exhortations; soul-saving principles of action....Christ's "sayings" then, had respect to things that were to be done, and not to matters of opinion and questions of theology.<sup>23</sup>

Beyond the inspired preaching by Christ there was the inspired preaching about Christ recorded in Acts. The apostolic model of proclaiming Jesus was God's divinely authorized example of how to preach. In his periodical<sup>24</sup> and for the reader's imitation Campbell analyzed the seven speeches found in the Book of Acts. He lectured on this theme from time to time<sup>25</sup> and his apology for the call to return to preaching as "in the beginning" was that the "same mint" was essential to the "same coin." He added:

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<sup>23</sup>Robert Richardson, "Nature of Christian Doctrine--No. I," M. H., Vol. VI, No. IV (April, 1856), p. 203 footnote.

<sup>24</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Preacher--No. V," M. H., Vol. III, No. VII (July 2, 1832), pp. 306-310; Vol. III, No. VIII (August, 1832), pp. 400-403; Vol. III, No. IX (September 3, 1832), pp. 467-469.

<sup>25</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe--No. XXVIII," M. H., Vol. V, No. VI (June, 1848), p. 337; "Notes on a Tour to Eastern Virginia," M. H., Vol. VI, No. II (February, 1856), p. 83.

We do this for the sake of directing the attention of our fellow-laborers to the philosophy of the Bible, and to the folly of attempting the conversion of sinners by a display of controversial, speculative, and dogmatic theology. The primitive preachers announced the wonderful works and designs of Heaven in sending the Messiah into the world, from which they deduced motives rationally and morally adapted to effect the change of disposition, state, and character which the gospel proposes as prerequisite to a glorious immortality.<sup>26</sup>

We conclude that Alexander Campbell, upon looking about at the preaching in his time, saw much to be desired. The revivalists were preaching their opinions and their experiences. The traditionalists were proclaiming their creeds and their theologies. He asked if preaching "Christianity" was the same as preaching Christ? If proclaiming the Holy Spirit in every paragraph was what the New Testament meant by preaching Jesus? If heralding the Law was the same as announcing the Gospel? If a preacher's constant assertion that he was a gospel preacher made him one?

Seeing a need Campbell sought a norm. It was not to be found in his immediate past, for the practice of the Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterian clergy was like that found elsewhere. By taking a text and immediately departing into a world of thought never imagined by the

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<sup>26</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters to England--No. III," M. H., Vol. I, No. VIII (August, 1837), p. 380.



Paul or the David who penned the words God's church was kept ignorant of His will. The Bible was claimed to be sufficient to make the man of God sufficient. Believing this, Campbell called for all teachers and preachers under his influence to restudy the ancient scriptures for a sure answer to the questions "what should we preach?" "how should we preach?" "who ought to preach?" "when and where and why?"

The need was urgent. The norm was available. "To the law and to the testimony."

The next four chapters will endeavor to present Campbell's measuring of the terms, speakers, audiences and speeches by the apostolic norm.

## CHAPTER II

### TERMS AND TASKS

#### A Biblical Look at Preaching

Webster's Dictionary states that to preach is "to discourse publicly on a religious subject, or from a text of scripture; to deliver a sermon," It also states that to baptize is "to dip or immerse in water or to pour or sprinkle water upon, as a religious rite or ceremony." Neither definition could satisfy the Reformer who had determined to give Biblical meanings to Biblical terms.<sup>1</sup> What a word had come to mean through common usage was one thing. What Christ or his apostles had in mind when they

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<sup>1</sup>The restoration of pure speech, or the calling of Bible things by Bible names was the first principle "for the healing of divisions amongst Christians and the better understanding of the Christian Institution." See "Synopsis of Reformation Principles and Objects," M. H., Vol. I, No. XII (December, 1837), p. 530.

used some term might be quite otherwise.

A discourse was not preaching just because it was delivered by a minister, spoken from a pulpit, or appended to a text.<sup>2</sup> In his customary way of seeking accuracy in terminology, Campbell carefully distinguished between present and past usages as well as distinctions in the various Scriptural words. He was confident that there was no inspired writer who made "a distinction without a difference."<sup>3</sup>

In an address before the Kentucky Convention of 1853, on "Church Edification" Campbell began:

BELOVED BRETHERN AND FELLOW CITIZENS:

Preaching the gospel and teaching the converts, are as distinct and distinguishable employments as enlisting an army and training it, or as creating a school and teaching it. Unhappily for the church and for the world, this distinction, if at all conceded as legitimate, is obliterated or annulled in almost all Protestant Christendom. The public heralds of Christianity, acting as missionaries or evangelists, and the elders or pastors of Christian churches, are indiscriminately denominated preachers, or minister; and whether addressing the church or the world, they are alike preaching, or ministering something which they call the gospel.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>"The Christian Ministry," a discourse by Francis Wayland with comments by Alexander Campbell, M. H., Vol. IV, No. VI (June, 1854), p. 303.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 304.

<sup>4</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Church Edification: An Address delivered before the Kentucky Convention, held at Harrodsburg, Ky. September 28, 1853," M. H., Vol. III, No. X (October, 1853), p. 541.

An exploration of the New Testament established the fact that "preaching" and "teaching" were two works and in the apostolic church never were confused. The Pastorals instructed an evangelist to "preach the word;" while they called for bishops "apt to teach" and able to convict gainsayers by "sound teaching." The apostles were commissioned to go into the world and "preach the gospel;" but were instructed that after the baptism of the converts, they were to "teach them to observe" all that Christ had commanded. The historian Luke recorded that the early disciples ceased not "to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." Paul, who was ordained a preacher and a teacher of the truth among the Gentiles, declared again to the Corinthian converts what he had initially "preached" and already they had received.

If reading, writing and speaking were different activities; so were preaching, teaching and exhorting.<sup>5</sup> If preaching and baptizing were not the same act, even if performed by the same person; so neither were preaching and teaching. In The Living Oracles,<sup>6</sup> the modern version of the New Testament published by Campbell, keerugma and

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<sup>5</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letter from Australia," M. H., Vol. V, No. I (January, 1862), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>The Living Oracles, trans. from orig. Greek by Drs. George Campbell, James MacKnight, and Philip Doddridge with preface and various emendations, and appendix by Alexander Campbell, (Cincinnati: G. W. Rice, 1870).

the didache were rendered "proclamation" and "teaching."

Keerux, the preacher, keerussoo, I preach and Keerugma the speech, or the preaching--and also euaggelistees (sic) the evangelist, euaggelion, the gospel and euaggelizoo, I preach the gospel, frequently occur in the Greek Christian Scriptures--and are of nearly equal circulation; from didaskoo, I teach, didaskalia and didachee a doctrine, and didaskalos a teacher. No two such families of words of so many branches, and of so large a currency are more distinguishable or more frequently distinguished in the whole nomenclature of the Christian Scriptures.<sup>7</sup>

Preachers, in the Biblical limitations of the word, were to solicit pupils for the school of Christ<sup>8</sup> where teachers then would instruct them. Let preachers conquer men for Christ and let elders maintain the conquest. Let preachers obtain, and then let elders sustain, the family of God.<sup>9</sup> One announces salvation through Christ. The other develops the duties incumbent upon those who have placed themselves under Christ's guidance. To the world the gospel is preached. To the initiated (the church) the gospel is expounded.

Paul may have declared the gospel facts to the

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<sup>7</sup>Alexander Campbell, "An Address Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Christian Missionary Society, A. D. 1857," M. H., Vol. VII, No. XI (November, 1857), p. 607.

<sup>8</sup>"Church Edification," ibid., p. 542.

<sup>9</sup>"Co-operation of Churches--No. III," by PHILIP, M. H., Vol. II, No. VI (June 6, 1831), p. 244.

Corinthian church; but to the world outside the church he preached them.<sup>10</sup> News is reported, proclaimed, preached. No one teaches news or exhorts news.<sup>11</sup> Conversion is the end result of preaching; while progress and perfection are the goal of teaching. Simply put: "to make the fact known is to preach, and to explain the meaning of that fact is to teach."<sup>12</sup> These words were in Campbell's ears and mind as different in sense as in sound.<sup>13</sup>

Such a definitive look at preaching, put real limitations on the preacher's subject matter. Preaching was for sinners and teaching for saints. If a preacher was a herald or proclaimer of news, he dealt in facts and events. As a patient needed medicine to cure his disease and not a lecture on the nature of his disease, or an analysis of the remedy so the world needed the gospel more than a discourse about it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Practical Thoughts and Reflections," M. H., Vol. III, No. VI (June, 1846), p. 350.

<sup>11</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Pre-eminence of Preaching in Public Worship," M. H., Vol. VI, No. IV (April, 1862), p. 154.

<sup>12</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Familiar Dialogue, Between the Editor and a Clergyman," Part I, C. B., Vol. I, No. XII (June 5, 1824), p. 233.

<sup>13</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Acts of the Apostles--Analysis of Section IV," M. H., Vol. III, No. VI (June, 1846), p. 350.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Answer to Query IV," C. B., Vol. VI, No. V (December 1, 1828), p. 108.

The preacher announced or narrated the wonderful works of God in Christ. He was to state, illustrate and prove the great gospel facts, but he was not to proclaim a theory, a speculation or a philosophy. He was not to indoctrinate as if that would or could produce faith. He was not to preach "Christianity" but Christ. He could not even preach morality. Such a topic is teachable but not preachable.<sup>15</sup>

No man, no philologist, can preach doctrines; but any one conversant with doctrines may teach them. We proclaim, we preach, we announce facts and events, and such are the materials of the gospel. It is no theory, no philosophy, no doctrine, no speculation, no abstraction, no logical deduction, but a series of the most animating, soul-stirring, soul-cheering, soul-exhilarating facts, events, precepts, promises, consolations, joys, beatitudes--"an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," honor and blessedness! Such is the blissful gospel, and the blissful work of proclaiming it to Jew or gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free.<sup>16</sup>

The teacher of Christians was limited, likewise, by the Scripture. The apostles did not attempt to convert men by teaching but by preaching. Neither did they try to perfect the disciples by preaching. The "Apostles' teaching" had to do, not with tenets to be believed, but with precepts to be obeyed. Baptized believers were to be

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<sup>15</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Dr. Chalmer's Experiment," M. H., Vol. IV, No. V (May, 1854), p 272.

<sup>16</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Missions and Missionaries," M. H., Vol.. IV, No. XXI (December, 1861), pp. 666-667.

taught to observe what was commanded by Christ. Jesus' teaching was not theoretical but practical; and it was intended, not to impart orthodox views, but to produce moral and spiritual lives.<sup>17</sup> An error crying out for reform was the supposition that the Christian faith was doctrinal, consisting of tenets; when it was personal, having to do with trust in Christ.

A second place where the church had gone awry was in imagining that its teachers were to make men think right; when their divinely given task was to teach them to do right. In church history recurred the sad record of some man who, though living the life of a Christian, was being debarred from Christian fellowship because he was Arminian, Calvinistic, or unorthodox according to the definitions of some school.

The failure of the nineteenth century church to see this first century division between teaching and preaching, led to the confusion of converting the church into the world and the world into the church. Pedobaptists had put the world into the church, according to Campbell, through infant baptism. They, thus, had always to preach the

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<sup>17</sup>Robert Richardson writes at length on this Campbellian emphasis regarding the importance of righteous living as opposed to correct thinking on theological themes. See his "Nature of Christian Doctrine--No. II," M. H., Vol. VI, No. IV (April, 1856), pp. 205-211.



gospel to their church members in order to convert them, as if they were yet in the world. And, judging from the pulpit expositions, Baptists were more frequently found preaching conversion to their hearers than building them up in their faith.<sup>18</sup>

C. H. Dodd<sup>19</sup> in his book, The Apostolic Preaching, with its analysis of the kerugma found in the sermons of Acts, plus modern form-criticism's recognition of the gospels as expanded kerugma, recognize the same distinction of kerugma and didache, preaching and teaching.

That this distinction is not so new is evident from a quote in the Millennial Harbinger of June, 1846. An author who signed his name by the simple initial "N." quoted the Dr. Campbell upon whose translation work Alexander Campbell had relied for his modern version of the New Testament.

No moral instructions, or doctrinal explanations, given either by our Lord or his Apostles, are ever either in the Gospels or the Acts, denominated preaching....  
(kerusso) always implied public notice of some event, either accomplished or about to be accomplished, often accompanied by a warning to do, or forbear something, but it

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<sup>18</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Church Edification, etc.," M. H., Vol. III, No. X (October, 1853), pp. 544-546.

<sup>19</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1964). Reginald H. Fuller in What Is Liturgical Preaching (London: S. C. M., 1957) adds to the distinction between kerugma and didache a third ministry of the Word which he terms paraklesis.

never denoted either a comment on, or an explanation of any subject.<sup>20</sup>

A distinction of work suggests a division of labor among the workers. We now seek to learn Campbell's concept of the functionaries within the ministering priesthood of believers. No reader of the Christian Baptist was long in discovering that the return to the "ancient order of things" could begin only when the "kingdom of the clergy" was replaced by the more humble New Testament offices of evangelist, bishop and deacon.<sup>21</sup>

"Let us have no clergy at all, learned or unlearned," was his plea.<sup>22</sup> The clergy had usurped the rights and privileges of all believers. The clergy might be a creation patterned after all other religions; but it was not known to that religion initiated by Christ. However, all the laity--all the people of God--were to minister; and Christ had given certain members of His body revealing, preaching and teaching functions that were to prepare His other ministers to do their work more effectively.

When attacking the hireling clergy for their pretence

<sup>20</sup>"Use and Abuse of Preaching--No. III," Vol. III, No. VI, p. 318.

<sup>21</sup>We will not deal in this work with the ministry of the deacon for Campbell says regarding him "there is not a single intimation that preaching or teaching is any part of his office." See "The Permanent Orders of the Ministry," M. H., Vol. V, No. XI (November, 1855), p. 626.

<sup>22</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Clergy--No. IV," C. B., Vol. I, No. VI (January 5, 1824), p. 109.

of having priestly prerogatives or a sacerdotal ministry; he warned against a possible misunderstanding by the underlined note:

Nota Bene.--In our remarks upon the "Christian Clergy," we never include the Elders or Deacons of a Christian Assembly or those in the New Testament called Overseers and Servants of the Christian Church. These we consider as very different characters.<sup>23</sup>

Campbell set as his goal the overthrow of this class that he considered as a whole to be proud and self-seeking. He attacked their titles, party loyalty, clerical garb and sanctimonious speech.

In place of the seminary-trained, religious professional over the churches, he sought to re-establish the shepherding ministry of elders within the churches. As the ministry of Christ in the flesh was not to be repeated in every age; so the special ministry of the apostles that Jesus had selected possessed a "once for all" character. No present-day human could qualify as a witness of Christ's resurrection, nor pretend to apostolic powers, nor claim such a direct call from heaven.

The apostles and prophets were officers extraordi-

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<sup>23</sup>Alexander Campbell, "'The Origin' of the Christian Clergy, Splendid Meeting House, and Fixed Salaries, Exhibited from Ecclesiastical History," C. B., Vol. I, No. I (July, 1823), p. 20.

nary,<sup>24</sup> necessary to the setting up of the Christian institution. Once established, it only required an ordinary administration of affairs. Moses was endowed with miracle-power as the Jewish dispensation began. The "signs of an apostle" accompanied the establishment of the new Israel as well. Moses still spoke in the synagogues when his writings were read and the apostles still ruled in the churches through the New Testament, the record of their preaching and teaching.

Whereas an apostle of Christ was one of the few disciples necessary to reveal and confirm the gospel story, an evangelist for Christ was one of the many disciples in every age and place necessary to make the apostolic witness known. The preacher, or evangelist, was a foreign minister of the church in contrast to the bishops who were domestic ministers. The latter were for building up the church at home and the former for founding new communities throughout the land.

Evangelists were called missionaries, because this word suggested that they were sent and sustained by the church. The term evangelist derived from the nature of

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<sup>24</sup>"Moses and Jesus were, superlatively, ministers extraordinary. So were, in a second degree, the prophets and apostles. Priests and Levites were the ordinary ministers of the Jewish institution. Evangelists, teachers and deacons, (sometimes called preachers, pastors and deacons,) are the ordinary ministers of the Christian institution." Alexander Campbell, "Support of the Christian Ministry-- No. II," M. H., Vol. I, No. XI (November, 1851), p. 638.

their work.<sup>25</sup> These gospel proclaimers might be sent by a particular congregation or by the whole church of a district;<sup>26</sup> as Walter Scott had worked as an evangelist for the Mahoning Baptist Association.<sup>27</sup>

The work of an evangelist was to convert sinners, plant churches and assist in setting things in order. Such a work would be needed until the world and the church became co-extensive. Then such a person would "not be necessary, any more than a standing army in time of peace."<sup>28</sup>

While in a lesser sense all were preachers, including the Psalmist's "heavens" that declared the glory of God;<sup>29</sup> there needed to be certain men especially set apart and devoted to this work. Each Christian in his private sphere was to publish the glad tidings. Still, the churches must send out public heralds who were to become wholly engrossed

<sup>25</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Ministry and Its Support--No. I," M. H., Vol. VII, No. IX (September, 1850), p. 481.

<sup>26</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Duty and Means of Supporting Evangelists--No. I," M. H., Vol. IV, No. IV (April, 1840), p. 180.

<sup>27</sup>"Quarterly Meeting," C. B., Vol. V, No. VII (February 5, 1828), p. 173.

<sup>28</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Ancient Order of Things--No. XXX Official Names and Titles," Z. B., Vol. VII, No. II (September 7, 1829), p. 48.

<sup>29</sup>In this lesser sense Campbell, for example, pleads "for many preachers like sister Bullard" who had led her children to Christ and had encouraged three of her four sons to become evangelists. "Sister Bullard," M. H., Vol. VI, No. VII (July, 1849), p. 378.

in the single work of reconciling men to God. Campbell wrote, "One business at a time is enough for the powers of any one man."<sup>30</sup>

But we shall be asked, "Is not preaching, and baptizing, and even teaching, the common privilege of all disciples, as they have opportunity?" And we also ask in answer, "Is it not the privilege of all fathers to teach their own children and to preside over their own families?" But who will thence infer, that all fathers are teachers and presidents, does not more shock common sense, than he who infers that all disciples, as such, are evangelists, pastors, and teachers, because we concede that in certain cases it is the privilege of all the citizens of Christ's kingdom to preach, baptize, and teach. Every citizen of Christ's kingdom has, in virtue of his citizenship, equal rights, privileges, and immunities. So has every citizen of the United States. Yet all citizens are not legislators, magistrates, judges, governors, etc. Before any community, civil or religious, is organized, every man has equal rights to do what seemeth good in his own eyes. But when organized, and persons appointed to office, then whatever rights, duties, privileges are conferred on particular persons, can not of right belong to those who have transferred them; any more than a person can not both give and keep the same thing.<sup>31</sup>

These evangelists, though created by the church, did not serve it directly: but were sent out into the world. They to whom a preacher spoke were not his people, "nor

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<sup>30</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters to England," M. H., Vol. I, No. VII (July, 1837), p. 317.

<sup>31</sup>Alexander Campbell, The Christian System in Reference to the Union of Christians, and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity, as Plead in the Current Reformation. Fifth Edition. (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1901), p. 67.

was he their preacher!"<sup>32</sup> The relationship, however, of pastors and people, shepherds and sheep, was quite otherwise. A pastor or teacher had a particular charge over which the brethren and the Holy Spirit had constituted him an overseer.<sup>33</sup> Whereas the evangelists or preachers were for "marking the sheep and putting them into the green pastures;" the elders were "for taking care of the sheep."<sup>34</sup> No "overseers'" tenure was perpetual or his authority universal.<sup>35</sup>

Each congregation was for its well-being to have a plurality of bishops.<sup>36</sup> Every church in a city, and in most country places, was to strive to have at least one person wholly devoted to the pastoral office. Campbell observed: "whatever is every one's business, is no one's special duty."<sup>37</sup>

No man could be a pastor who had no specific pasture

<sup>32</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Elder J. B. Ferguson's Relation of Pastor and People--No. I," M. H., Vol. IV, No. X (October, 1854), p. 566.

<sup>33</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Evangelists and Pastors," M. H., Vol. VII, No. I (January, 1850), p. 23.

<sup>34</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Incidents on a Tour to the South--No. VI," M. H., Vol. III, No. VI (June, 1839) p. 265.

<sup>35</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Synopsis of Reformation Principles and Objects," M. H., Vol. I, No. XII (December, 1837), p. 534.

<sup>36</sup>Alexander Campbell, Christian System, p. 61.

<sup>37</sup>Alexander Campbell, "An Excursion of Sixteen Hundred Miles," M. H., Vol. III, No. VII (July, 1853), p. 400.

to tend. There had to be sheep, before there could be a shepherd. There had to be the work to be done, before there could be a workman. Campbell penned:

A BISHOP without a charge or cure, is  
like a husband without a wife....a presi-  
dent without a people, a teacher without  
pupils....an eye without a head, a tongue  
without a mouth, a hand without a body.<sup>38</sup>

It was common among the Baptists, as among the Methodists of the time, to have circuit riders. Campbell could see circuit-riding preachers, but not circulating pastors; even when the movement from church to church was limited to a few congregations. To catch his reasoning we lift out his own words prompted by a correspondence from Thomas Bullock of Kentucky:

As respects the four churches and one pastor, or the monthly rotation, or the "horsemill plan," as some call it; that is, in plain Scotch, one preacher coming once a month to preach to one church, in a regular round, as many times as there are months in a year--just as a blind horse, when he has gone once round, begins a second tour in the same track ....Let every particular congregation elect one or more bishops who had never been spoiled by the preaching plan, and loose all the cords which bind these present preachers to four congregations, and let them go in circuits in rotation as often and as extensively as they could, and preach and teach; but let the congregations meet every Lord's day with their own bishops, and attend upon the ancient order

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<sup>38</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things--No. XII. The Bishop's Office," C. B., Vol. III (April 3, 1826), p. 187.



of things; and when any of these circuit preachers made them a visit, let them exercise all the gifts they had for the edification of the brotherhood and the conversion of all around; but by no means to interfere with the stated worship of the day.<sup>39</sup>

Robert Richardson observed that Barton W. Stone, with whom Campbell was associated, was engaged mainly in preaching while Campbell worked primarily at teaching.<sup>40</sup> Campbell had been a teacher in his father's school at Rice Hill in Ireland before he was ordained a preacher. His later work as an editor prohibited him from doing the work of an evangelist. Even when making extensive tours he set out, not so much to preach the ancient gospel for the purpose of converting sinners to God, as to disseminate the general principles of reform amongst the Christians.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, he held in his mind a clear concept of what he would do if he ever set out to preach; and of what he would do when he was called upon to teach.

In 1822, under the pen name "Evangelicus," he had laid out the type of preaching exemplified in Acts that he

<sup>39</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Miscellaneous Letters--No. I," C. B., Vol. V, No. II (September 3, 1827), pp. 73-74.

<sup>40</sup>Robertson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 199.

<sup>41</sup>Alexander Campbell, "'Hints' to the Advocates of a Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things and to the Proclaimers of the Ancient Gospel," M. H., Vol. I, No. VIII (August 2, 1830), p. 366.

would follow upon an invitation to that work.<sup>42</sup> In his many addresses on "Christian Edification" he pleaded for a regular assembly of the school of Christ:

These schools were to be filled with none but baptized disciples....Each school was to have its college of elders or bishops, who were to teach, educate, and direct all the disciples....a school implies a schoolmaster. In a rhetorical license, Paul calls the Law "the Jews' schoolmaster" till Christ came. He is the president of the whole college of bishops, elders or teachers in the great congregation of the saints, or sanctified inmates of the great university which the great Teacher himself sent from God founded.<sup>43</sup>

The church members must punctually attend. They must not forsake or neglect the assembling of themselves together on the first day of the week.

They should carry with them, or have in their pews, the Holy Bible, and attend to all the readings, teachings, and exhortations of the eldership, book in hand.

The historical books, or the epistles written to the churches, should be taken up in order by the elder who officiates, who, of course, is apt to teach, and qualified to instruct the congregation.

The lesson for the day should be known before, and studied through the week. Several chapters may sometimes constitute but one lesson. A part of a chapter, or parable, a single paragraph may furnish an adequate theme for one meeting. These portions in regular sequence, read in the

<sup>42</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Preacher--No. VI," M. H., Vol. III, No. IX (September 3, 1832), p. 469. See also M. H., Vol. V, No. IX (September, 1834), p. 460.

<sup>43</sup>"Church Edification," M. H., Vol. III, No. X (October, 1853), p. 542.

closet, or in the family, should always be preparatory studies, with reference to public meetings, for edification.

A lecture of half an hour, more or less, should be prepared by the President of the day. A brief exhortation is always opportune.<sup>44</sup>

Campbell longed for the day when persons would be "taught the Christian religion as good scholars are taught the sciences!"<sup>45</sup> Such a time would not appear unless the church could see its need and seek to return to the Biblical norm of preaching and teaching. The first step back would be to find the Scriptural meaning of the terms used and a Biblical view of the tasks required. If anyone objected that he was quibbling about words, he had a reply:

To many it seems but of little consequence to be tenacious of the name. Why not then call all the leaders priests? Why not call them astrologers, soothsayers, or oneiro-critics, if the name be indifferent? Because, says one, those names are used to denote quite different characters. For the same reason, therefore, let the names which the apostles adopted be used in their own acceptation, and let those things, persons, and offices which the apostles said nothing about, be named or styled as the inventors please; but call not bitter sweet, nor sweet bitter. Let us not

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>"Organization--No. I," M. H., Vol. V, No. VII (July, 1855), p. 377.

call the messenger of a congregation, an elder. Let us not call a bishop, a divine; nor a deacon, a ruling elder. In a word, let us give to divine institutions divine names, and to human institutions human names.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration to An Ancient Order of Things: No. XIII. The Bishop's Office--No. II," C. B., Vol. III, No. XI (June 5, 1826), p. 216.

## CHAPTER III

### CALL AND CHARACTER

#### A Biblical Look at the Preacher

"Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," wrote Paul. "Woe is me," thought many others, "if I would dare to preach at all, when God has not laid his hand upon me and especially called me to stand behind the sacred desk and to be His spokesman." What was Campbell's thinking regarding the call to preach or teach? To whom was the right and duty given? What character must a preacher possess?

Although Campbell was a preacher's son; and probably had as many, or more, opportunities than others to assist in public worship; there is no trace of any attempt on his part to help conduct a public worship service until he was twenty-two years of age. Was this hesitency because of his feeling about the high qualifications demanded of a

minister? This appears as a possibility, if we consider the journal he kept when a student at the University of Glasgow. In this book were copied seven rules for a preacher.<sup>1</sup> The first four of these were regarding essentials for ministerial character and training. Campbell had been influenced by the Haldanes who allowed for a lay ministry; but had he been freed completely from the common idea of a special, divine call?

Once having determined to apply the New Testament as norm to all religious questions, Campbell did just that in relation to the preachers themselves. His conclusion was that no clergyman of his day, nor of any day since the last apostle died, could make claim to a special divine call to preach. To claim a direct, divine call to preach was to place an audience under a divine call to listen to the public instructor. God would neither send a liar, nor one unacquainted with his will, nor one unaccomplished for the task. If the Holy Spirit sent the speaker, it would be criminal to despise his instructions.<sup>2</sup> When apostles made such claims, they expected the recipients to accept the message as infallible. Were modern clergymen successors of the apostles as ambassadors of Christ?

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<sup>1</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Religion The Clergy--No. I," C. B., Vol. I, No. III (October 6, 1823), p. 52.

When the Editor of the Christian Baptist early set out to deny clerics the right to such a claim, he referred to "Rev. Gideon Blackburn, D. D. Pastor of the Church in Louisville, Kentucky" and jibed:

When therefore, the Holy Spirit, the presbytery, and the patrons of science, infidels and all, concur in attesting an ambassador of Christ, most assuredly we ought, with due submission, to sit at his feet. But this rebellious heart of mine wants something more than all the presbytery and the board of trustees can confer, in proof that....(he) is sent by the Holy Spirit, and a true ambassador of Jesus Christ. It is true that this sermon exhibits him very much in the true character of an ambassador, for as soon as an ambassador has proved his mission, his mere assertions and say so's are equal to all the logic and rhetoric of Demosthenes and Cicero united in one head. Consequently the Doctor, laying infinite stress upon his own infallibility, has not adduced one single scrap from Moses to John, to prove the subject of his discourse. This is, indeed, ambassador-like....(An ambassador) ought to take no text at all, but make a text for himself. The taking of a text implies inferiority and dependence, every way unbecoming "the legate of the skies."<sup>3</sup>

Did not the Pope of Rome claim a call? Where was the shade of difference?<sup>4</sup> These and other such inquiries provoked

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<sup>3</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Review of a Sermon," C. B., Vol. III, No. VIII (March 6, 1826), pp. 154-156. Campbell stood willing to deny in debate the proposition "That the Presbyterian clergy, or any other fraternity of Paids (sic)-Baptist clergy, is an order of men divinely constituted and authorized." See "Notification," C. B., Vol. III, No. I (July 16, 1825), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>"To Dr. A. Straith," C. B., Vol. VII, No. V (September 5, 1829), p. 108.

some,<sup>5</sup> but were received gratefully by others. Samuel Rogers of Ohio remembered how a heavy gloom hung over him when he would think of his call and compare it with that of the apostles. "Bless the Lord!", he cried "Alexander Campbell came to my relief."<sup>6</sup> Also from Ohio was another subscriber who appreciated the teaching regarding God's call. This one signing his letter with the lone initial "W." wrote:

...this same Christian Baptist has stripped me of my "call," my "ambassadorship," etc. and has taught me that the treasure which the Apostles had in earthly vessels I have in the Bible; and, in a word, has left me simply a disciple and laborer in the vineyard in common with all others, according to our several abilities.<sup>7</sup>

From its first days of publication the Christian Baptist addressed the clergy and asked them to answer three questions: Have you heard God's voice? Do you speak infallibly? Can you confirm the testimony by working miracles?<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Alexander Campbell, "To Bishop R. B. Semple--Letter V," C. B., Vol. V, No. IX (April 7, 1828), p. 276.

<sup>6</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 332-333.

<sup>7</sup>"Letter to the Editor," C. B., Vol. V, No. VII (February 5, 1828), p. 169.

<sup>8</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Religion The Clergy--No. I," C. B., Vol. I, No. III (October 6, 1823) p. 54.



The miracle was a "must,"<sup>9</sup> The voice of Christ heard (not an inner feeling so interpreted) was essential in a call. Campbell gave this story:

Suppose this same man who contends for a call, without a voice, had a son ploughing in his field, and his son leaves the plough and goes to visit his friends. After some time he sends a message for his son. His son appears; and when asked why he forsook the plough, and went about riding and feasting with his friends, he answers, Father, you called me from the plough and commanded me to visit your and my friends. Nay, son, replies the father, did you hear my voice calling or commanding you to such a course of conduct? No, father, replies the son, I did not hear your voice specially calling or commanding me, but I had a deep impression on my mind that it was your wish and my duty to leave the plough and go avisting. Go, sir, answers the irritated father, to your plough, and remember it is time enough to consider yourself called when you hear my voice.<sup>10</sup>

It was hard for Campbell to understand how a man with no pretence of a divine call, like Elder John Secrest, could report to immersing five hundred and thirty persons with his own hands in six months; while many God-called preachers claiming an apostolic succession of sorts were experiencing no apostolic successes.<sup>11</sup> It was impossible

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<sup>9</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Remarks on Missionaries," C. B., Vol. I, No. II (September 1, 1823), p. 42.

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Religion The Clergy--No. I," C. B., Vol. I, No. III (October 6, 1823), p. 53.

<sup>11</sup>"A Years Labor," C. B., Vol. V, No. VII (February 5, 1828), p. 173.

for Campbell to believe that contradictory men as different as "Swedenborg, Fox, Calvin, Wesley, or Gill,"<sup>12</sup> could all be sent by God.

As to "speaking infallibly," it was noted that in his day some very ignorant men were making some exceedingly great claims at a divine call. Campbell pointed out that the "unlearned and ignorant" men that Christ had called did not continue ignorant after he called them, but showed a wisdom beyond human learning. He pressed the observation: "when Christ called a blind man he opened his eyes, while our blind continue blind after the pretended call."<sup>13</sup>

To whom did Christ say the words recorded in Matthew 28:19-20 or Mark 16:15-16? Campbell replied:

I understand the commission as follows:  
 "Go ye, Peter and Andrew, James and John, Zebedee, Philip and Bartholemew, Thomas and Matthew Levi; James Alpheus and Lebbeius Thaddeus, with Simon the Canaanite, and disciple all nations, immersing the believers of all nations into the faith of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching the baptized disciples to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, either before or since my resurrection from the dead --and take notice that I shall be ever present, with signs and wonders, to confirm your testimony, to the end of this state; for before this

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<sup>12</sup>"Incidents on a Tour to Nashville, Tennessee-- No. VI," M. H., Vol. II, No. III (March 7, 1831), p. 114.

<sup>13</sup>"Colleges," M. H., Vol. VII, No. V (May, 1843), p. 213.

generation shall have passed away the gospel shall be preached to all nations for a testimony to them."<sup>14</sup>

The apostles of Christ still were going into all the world through their writings. "Though dead, they still preach,"<sup>15</sup> Campbell reasoned. Like "Moses was preached being read in the synagogues," the apostles still published the news about Christ when their testimony was read.<sup>16</sup> As the law and the prophets prophesied until John, Christ and the apostles continued testifying in all ages.<sup>17</sup> Their supernatural works "were written for the same purpose they were wrought."<sup>18</sup> Only a new gospel would need a new group of especially called men to publish it and modern-day miracles to establish it.

In denying the special, divine call of the clergy, Campbell did not mean that there was no call at all; and

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Familiar Dialogue, Between the Editor and a Clergyman. Part II," C. B., Vol. II, No. I (August 2, 1824), p. 19. Cp. "Remarks on Missionaries," C. B., Vol. I, No. II (September 1, 1823), p. 42.

<sup>15</sup>Alexander Campbell, "An Address," M. H., Vol. III, No. XI (November, 1853), p. 606.

<sup>16</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Familiar Dialogue, Between the Editor and a Clergyman. Part I," C. B., Vol. I, No. XII (June 5, 1824), p. 233.

<sup>17</sup>"Abuses of Christianity," C. B., Vol. I, No. IV (November 3, 1823), p. 77.

<sup>18</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Essays on the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Salvation of Men--No. IV," C. B., Vol. II, No. IV (November 1, 1824), p. 71.

therefore the Lord's people had nothing to do for Him. Rather, there was a general call of Christ through the written Word<sup>19</sup> to the total church. The mischief of a clergy was that "everybody's mouth was shut up but their own."<sup>20</sup> Campbell wrote:

I hold that every citizen in Christ's kingdom is bound to take up arms for the king, as much as I am; and if he cannot go to fight the battles of the Lord, he must take care of the wives and children of those who can, and who will fight for their king and country.<sup>21</sup>

The service of Christ was no monopoly of the clerical few who claimed special endowments. It was the work of all followers of Christ to the extent of their ability.

"Competency to instruct, and the need for it" was the only call for preaching in its widest sense.<sup>22</sup> Six hundred thousand militia well-armed was better, in Campbell's view, than ten thousand regulars. He predicted:

The time will come, nor far distant is the day, when it will be acknowledged that the

<sup>19</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Voice of God and the Word of God," M. H., Vol. I, No. III (March 1, 1830), p. 126.

<sup>20</sup>Alexander Campbell, C. B., Vol. I, No. XI (June 7, 1824), p. 217.

<sup>21</sup>"The Regeneration of the Church," M. H., Vol. II, No. VI (August 5, 1833), p. 375.

<sup>22</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Incidents on a Tour to Nashville, Tennessee--No. VI," M. H., Vol. II, No. III (March 7, 1831), p. 114.

most puissant converting army that ever entered the field, is that composed of FATHERS, MOTHERS, NURSES, AND SCHOOL-MASTERS. Whenever this secret is fully developed, then will there be a mighty breaking in upon the ranks of the adversary....I know from a little experience, and from some observation, as well as from what the Acts of the Apostles teach, that the most efficient system, ever yet adopted, was that of the Founder of the Christian institution of making every man and woman in the ranks a preacher in the ancient import of that term. Every church on his plan was a theological school--every Christian, a missionary; and every day's behavior, a sermon either in word or deed....This is a prominent part of the Reformation now needed; and it will be then, and not till then, when all the citizens of the kingdom of Heaven are citizen soldiers, that the armies of the aliens can be completely routed.<sup>23</sup>

All Christians are preachers, in some department in society; and if ever this is lost sight of, there is an end of reformation.<sup>24</sup>

Proper decorum, however, avoided the mob rule of just anyone and everyone at an assembly talking either at once

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<sup>23</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermons to Young Preachers--No. IV," C. B., Vol. VII, No. IX (April 5, 1830), pp. 214-216. Campbell constantly reiterated the parent's place as preacher to their children. See "Ancient Order of Things--No XXX Official Names and Titles," C. B., Vol. VII, No. II (September 7, 1829), p. 47; "The Three Ages. Jewish Age--No. XIII," C. B., Vol. VII, No. IX (April 5, 1830), p. 210; "Address to Christian Mothers," C. B., Vol. I, No. XI (June 7, 1824), p. 213.

<sup>24</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Co-operation of Churches--No. VI," M. H., Vol. III, No. VI (June 7, 1832), p. 249.

or in rotation.<sup>25</sup> Decency and order looked beyond the private preaching and teaching Christians to public preachers and teachers called by the church.<sup>26</sup> The entire church was given the general call to evangelize, baptize and catechize; as the apostles were given the special call from Christ. The church could and ought to pick from its midst qualified men whom they would call to some service as bishop, deacon, or preacher.<sup>27</sup>

Alexander Campbell's preaching-father, Thomas Campbell, had hoped for Alexander to preach someday.<sup>28</sup> But was this the desire of the heavenly Father? In December of 1811 young Campbell reviewed the hand of Providence over his life which suggested his obligation to a special devotion of life to Christ. He enumerated God's provisions to him of religious parents, a Christian wife, extraordinary deliverance with his life on two occasions, the talents and education equipping him to edify others, his desire for the salvation of himself and others, and God's giving him "a

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<sup>25</sup>"To Epaphras--No. III," a letter signed by R. Richardson, S. Maxwell and A. Campbell, M. H., Vol. III, No. X (October 1, 1832), p. 50.

<sup>26</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Answers to S. B. Giles: 'Evangelists and pastors'," M. H., Vol. VII, No. I (January, 1850), p. 23.

<sup>27</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Reply to Timothy," M. H., Vol. V, No. VII (July, 1834), p. 316. See Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 130 and "Co-operation of Churches--No. III," M. H., Vol. II, No. VI (June 6, 1831), p. 243.

<sup>28</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 148.

call from the church to preach the Gospel."<sup>29</sup> On January 1, 1812 by the authority of the single and tiny congregation at Brush Run (some eight miles southwest of Washington, Pennsylvania) and where he had preached his first sermon in America in May, 1810, Alexander Campbell was ordained to the ministry of preaching and teaching. "Ordination" did not qualify Campbell for an office. It put him into an office for which the congregation believed him to be qualified.

There was something humbling in the "lay ministry," "no clergy" concept. And humility was an essential quality for the public servants of the church. Vanity was a beguiling temptation to preachers everywhere. The clergy "have occupied a most conspicuous place in the Egyptian, Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, Roman, and Anti-Christian empires," observed Campbell. The man destined for "holy orders," finally acquiring the coveted "Doctor of Divinity," in the process may become susceptible to pride. Campbell noted:

...my young priest gradually assumes a sanctimonious air, a holy gloom overspreads his face, and a pious sedateness reigns from his eyebrows to his chin. His very tone of voice participates in the deep devotion of his soul. His words flow on with a solemn slowness, and every period ends with a heavenly cadence. There is a kind of

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<sup>29</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 381.

angelic demeanor in his gait, and a seraphic sweetness in all his movements. With his Sunday coat, on a Sabbath morn, he puts on a mantle of deeper sanctity, and imperceptibly learns the three grand tones--the Sabbath tone, the pulpit tone, and the praying tone--these are the devout, the more devout, and the most devout.<sup>30</sup>

Modesty and not arrogance ought to be the mark of the preacher. He should never be guilty of assuming an air as many had. "Egotism--A Few Hints to Some Preachers," an article by Archippus found room in the pages of the Mil-lennial Harbinger<sup>31</sup> to ward off the enemy among Disciples. Their buildings and their public spokesmen were to be "plain and unadorned, save with simplicity and neatness."<sup>32</sup> Their dress was not to be in keeping with that which was popular among seminaries during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and which imbibed the "spirit of Popedom." It was rather to be that reflecting the humble spirit of the first century messengers of Christ.

From Europe, where so much pomp was evident to the traveler from the American frontier, he wrote:

I blame not Kings and Queens for royal robes and vestments--the bridegroom or

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<sup>30</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Clergy--No. IV," C. B., Vol. I, No. VI (January 5, 1824), pp. 105-106.

<sup>31</sup>Vol. VI, No. IX (September, 1849), pp. 502-504.

<sup>32</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters No. XXXI," M. H., Vol. V, No. IX (September, 1848), p. 521.



the bride for a wedding garment; but to see....Bachelors and Doctors of Divinity, in apparel so theatrically vain and foolish--scarfed and cassocked, gowned and tasseled, hooded and sashed, caps the climax of learned folly and sainted pride.<sup>33</sup>

Like the farmer, editor, evangelist, teacher, mechanic, merchant and post-master that he was, Alexander Campbell wanted to be known by his name alone and not by the title "Reverend," "Bishop" or even "Mister."<sup>34</sup> He wanted the preachers to think of their themes and their audiences rather than themselves. Those speakers who were too conscious of their delivery were to beware of becoming like men looking into a mirror admiring themselves.<sup>35</sup> While Campbell's admirers saw in him "the total absence of any disposition to self-applause," remarking that he was "insensible to flattery;"<sup>36</sup> an occasional enemy thought that few persons had ever possessed more of the qualities of a

<sup>33</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe--No. XX," M. H., Vol. V, No. I (January, 1848), p. 30.

<sup>34</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Bishops," M. H., Vol. I, No. IX (September 6, 1830), p. 428. On two occasions (October 22 and 29, 1810) Campbell advertised in The Reporter his sermon to be brought before the Christian Association of Washington and placed the initials V. D. S. after his name (i.e., Verbi Divini Servus, Servant of the Word of God). See Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 335.

<sup>35</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermons to Young Preachers No. II," C. B., Vol. VII, No. V (December 5, 1829), p. 105.

<sup>36</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 583.

religious demagogue" than he and that he was "fond of public notoriety."<sup>37</sup>

In "An Address Delivered Before the Ohio State Missionary Society, at Its Anniversary, May 21, 1862," he raised the "practical and all interesting question: What are the qualifications and characteristics of the Evangelist, or gospel preacher?"<sup>38</sup> One answer, besides that of true humility, was that of prayerful earnestness. For the exception of an article by debate-opponent N. L. Rice in the Presbyterian Exposition<sup>39</sup> charging Campbell with monetary motives, that claim is never heard. Campbell had never ceased-fire against hirelings who preached for the pay in it.<sup>40</sup> He, himself, had turned down "most generous offers" by New York churches because of "having resolved at that early day never to accept a salary for preaching."<sup>41</sup> It is a stroke of humor when in 1828 he offered to give

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<sup>37</sup>"'Campbellism' from the Watchman of the Prairies," M. H., Vol. I, No. II (February, 1851), p. 83.

<sup>38</sup>M. H., Vol. VI, No. VI (June, 1862), p. 250.

<sup>39</sup>Louisville (January 5, 1857).

<sup>40</sup>See Alexander Campbell, "Extracts from My Sentimental Journal. No. III," C. B., Vol. II, No. XII (July 4, 1825), p. 248; "Remarks on Missionaries," C. B., Vol. I, No. II (September 1, 1823), p. 38; "American Bible Society," M. H., Vol. II, No. II (October 19, 1829), p. 76.

<sup>41</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Tracts for Tennessee Baptists," M. H., Vol. IV, No. IX (September, 1854), p. 497.

"the Rev. Mr. Smith, of Kentucky" all his salary received for preaching during the last fifteen years of his life, if Mr. Smith could prove a certain charge.<sup>42</sup> It was a stroke of good fortune when he married into sufficient wealth to make such a self-giving ministry possible.

Christian "overseers" had a divine right to the financial support of the brethren when they called for it.<sup>43</sup> Campbell just chose to preach without pay, as did Paul in apostolic times and as did many pioneer lay-preachers in frontier times. He was not remiss in raising funds for Christian professors at Bethany, the College of which he was founder and first president. His tour notes often included place, subject of sermon and amount raised for the school (\$1025, \$1500, \$725, etc.).<sup>44</sup> He even allowed tickets of admission to be sold in St. Louis for a series of his lectures, with all funds going to the church there.<sup>45</sup> He exhorted Disciples in the political centre, Columbus, to "purchase a lot....build a large tabernacle, and station an evangelist there who can command the

<sup>42</sup>Footnote by Alexander Campbell to a letter from S. G. Marshall, C. B., Vol. V, No. XI (June 2, 1828), p. 260.

<sup>43</sup>Alexander Campbell, Answer to a letter from "J. T.", C. B., Vol. VII, No. II (September 7, 1829), p. 36.

<sup>44</sup>For example, "Notes on a Tour to Illinois--No. III," M. H., Vol. IV, No. I (January, 1854), pp. 41-50.

<sup>45</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to Illinois," M. H., Vol. IV, No. III (March, 1853), p. 139.

attention of that community."<sup>46</sup>

Campbell filled another requisite characteristic of the preacher by having an earnest, prayerful life. No counterfeit was possible here. More attention by every preacher to the spirit of prayer, rather than to a fine style, would have suited him.<sup>47</sup> His wife spoke of his consistent life of "fervent, ardent prayer, constantly in the family and in the closet." She broke into exclamation when she thought of the prayers she had heard, including many he had uttered at the midnight hour "whilst profoundly asleep."<sup>48</sup>

Inseparably connected with the pastoral quality of prayerful earnestness was that of morality and wisdom. In the Harbinger series on "Ministerial Character" the "No. I" topics included both of the latter:

...a deep and sublime piety, a pure and noble morality on the part of the minister of the gospel, with a reasonable amount of learning and utterance, is more than worth all the attainments of a Selden or an Erasmus, and all the eloquence of a Cicero

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<sup>46</sup>Alexander Campbell, "An Excursion to Kentucky and Henry Female College," M. H., Vol. VI, No. VII (July, 1856), p. 395.

<sup>47</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Practical Thoughts and Reflections," M. H., Vol. III, No. VIII (August, 1846), pp. 434-435.

<sup>48</sup>Selina Huntington Campbell, "An Address to the Church and a Tribute of My Husband," in Home Life and Reminiscences of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: John Burns, Publisher and Book Seller, 1882), p. 253.

or a Demosthenes, without these scriptural and divine accomplishments.<sup>49</sup>

The high qualities of a gospel minister that Campbell had copied in his journal during student days at Glasgow,<sup>50</sup> had put piety first; and, after humility, being "well instructed in morality and religion, and in the original tongues in which the Scriptures are written."<sup>51</sup>

Piety was the greater eloquence. Without living the gospel life, the eloquence of Apollos would have been vain. Campbell wrote: "[Man's] influence never can precede, but must, in the order of things, depend upon, and follow after character."<sup>52</sup> The "sage of Bethany," being of good heart and clear understanding, gave weight to his teachings by the consistency of a life well-lived.

In the title of Editor-Perry Epler Gresham's "Alexander Campbell, The Sage of Bethany: A Pioneer in Broadcloth" you have the combined emphasis on the characteristics of intellect and dignity for which Campbell was noted and upon which Campbell insisted in every public messenger of the church. Campbell was a gentleman--a Southern Gentleman--,

<sup>49</sup>Vol. II, No. I (January, 1845), p. 13.

<sup>50</sup>Infra, p. 112.

<sup>51</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 138.

<sup>52</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Introductory Remarks," M. H., Vol. III, No. I (January 2, 1832), p. 3.

and was very much at home among gentlemen. He quoted Cowper (Task--Book II) with full agreement in his attack on a minister's lightness of speech:

'Tis pitiful  
 To court a grin, when you should win a soul;  
 To break a jest, when pity would inspire  
 Pathetic exhortation; and t' address  
 The skittish fancy with facetious tales,  
 When sent with God's commission to the heart!  
 So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip  
 Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,  
 And I consent you take it for your text.  
 Your only one, till sides and benches fall.  
 No: he was serious in a serious cause,  
 And understood too well the weighty terms,  
 That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop  
 To conquer those by jocular exploits,  
 Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.<sup>53</sup>

To lack gravity would be like a physician coming to a dying man in agony with an amusing tale rather than a sympathetic hand.<sup>54</sup> He loved and respected "Raccoon" John Smith; but never sat easy in his presence, when the beloved John was beset with the temptation to joke in a message. When John grew palsied and tremulous through the passing of time, Campbell noticed:

His gravity, also, appears in more successful conflict with a tendency or endowment

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<sup>53</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Ministerial Character--No. I," M. H., Vol. II, No. I (January, 1845), p. 16.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., "No. II," M. H., Vol. II, No. III (March, 1845), p. 97.

almost irrepressible, to say things which, though savory and good, are often better adapted to elicit a smile than a tear, even from the most serious and devotional hearers.<sup>55</sup>

Campbell, unlike his more crude friend, John Smith, used only those analogies that would be acceptable completely to the most delicate. Different from his debate opponent, N. L. Rice, who frequently drew audience laughs, Campbell was never recorded to have received that kind of a response. The grand themes and solemn occasions would make a jest of "more offensive savor than Solomon's dead fly in the ointment of the apothecary."<sup>56</sup>

He who would teach others must be one whose head was "full of light," and whose heart was "full of love."<sup>57</sup> Christ could be preached successfully only when preached according to the spirit and temper of Christ. Thus truth was to be spoken in love. Persuasion, not denunciation, was the key to the human heart; and darkness was dispelled by light and not by an inveighing against it. The evangelist ought to delight in dwelling on the love of God rather

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<sup>55</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters to My Co-Editors--No. II," M. H., Vol. VII, No. IV (April, 1850), p. 223.

<sup>56</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Reformation--No. IV, Reformation of the Preachers of Reformation," M. H., Vol. VI, No. III (March, 1835), p. 136.

<sup>57</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Preface," M. H., Vol. I, No. I (January, 1851), p. 4.

than on the fire of hell.<sup>58</sup>

It was evident to the Skeptics, who listened in Tammany and Concert Halls to Campbell's three discourses against Infidelity, that here was a man reasoning with them because he liked them and wanted to share with them something he really believed. In a letter to Campbell from the Society of Moral Philanthropists, they thanked him for his "friendly" visit and for his adding "dignity to their hall." They expressed gratitude for his friendly attitude towards all Skeptics in "appealing to them as men--as honest men, instead of treating them with contumely, as is the conduct of the Christian priesthood of New York."<sup>59</sup>

Some in "the Christian priesthood of New York" and elsewhere felt the pinch of Campbell's attack on clericalism and couldn't agree to any compliments given regarding his loving nature. They saw "harsh epithets and much sarcasm"<sup>60</sup> and the going "beyond all the bounds of scripture allowance"<sup>61</sup> in rigidity and satire in his

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<sup>58</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Order--as respects the Labors of Evangelists," M. H., Vol. III, No. VIII (October, 1835), p. 524.

<sup>59</sup>"Notes on a Tour to New York--No. 6," M. H., Vol. V, No. II (February, 1834), p. 79.

<sup>60</sup>"To the Editor of the Christian Baptist," C. B., Vol. IV, No. VI (January 1, 1827), p. 115.

<sup>61</sup>"Letter to Brother Campbell from R. B. S.," C. B., Vol. III, No. IX (April 3, 1826), p. 177.



writings. He looked into his own heart and said:

An unsympathizing man is a monster in the form of humanity....No man can enter a pulpit with any sincere hope of success who does not endeavor to concentrate his whole energies--his conscience, his heart, his whole benevolence and every tender sympathy of his nature on perishing humanity. He must feel as a humane friend would feel on seeing his neighbor's house on fire.<sup>62</sup>

We have learned that Campbell called to the Bible for an answer to his questions about the man called "preacher." What was his call? What ought to be his character? The echoing answer seemed to be clear to him that the churches of Christ, in the name of God, were to put all Christians to that task whereto they were qualified, under the leadership of men whom they had found humble and sincere, godly and dignified, loving and wise. Such Church-sent men were to be trained in the Scripture to understand (1) the people to whom they spoke and (2) the message which they would bring to their audiences. Our next two chapters will tell us what Campbell saw when he looked to the Bible concerning both of these areas.

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<sup>62</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Short Sermons for Business Men--No. IX," M. H., Vol. IV, No. I (January, 1861), p. 32.

## CHAPTER IV

### MANKIND AND MISSION

#### A Biblical Look at the Audience

Proverbially, counting sheep has been considered a way of inducing sleep. A shepherd of souls, however, has been startled awake occasionally upon counting his flock and realizing how many have strayed from the fold.

Campbell like all public speakers was not only cognizant of his subject, but of the subjects before him--who they were? how many they were? where they were religiously? In letters to his wife,<sup>1</sup> in notes to his co-editors,<sup>2</sup> or in diaries and other personal records, he wrote about the audiences that heard him.

When on tour away from home, as he often was, the

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<sup>1</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 634-638.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters to My Co-editors--No. II," M. H., Vol. VII, No. IV (April, 1850), pp. 218-222.

general difficulty was to find a building large enough to accommodate the people flocking from near and far. This meant in most cases asking for the use of the most commodious church in town, which very seldom was the building where the Disciples gathered. The city hall,<sup>3</sup> the county court-house,<sup>4</sup> the open-air of a public square, the theatrical halls or debating halls of a city,<sup>5</sup> the lecture rooms on a college campus or the railway station might suffice.<sup>6</sup> Even when special facilities for the occasion were constructed in the open air; the crowds most always exceeded the estimations.<sup>7</sup>

Campbell in a court-house "found two square feet on the Judges bench" reserved for him, while the whole area was but "one compact mass of flesh and blood."<sup>8</sup> In churches he addressed also the portion that could hear "through the

<sup>3</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe--No VI," M. H., Vol. IV, No. IX (September, 1847), p. 527.

<sup>4</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Our Tour to the West--No. II," M. H., Vol. III, No. IV (April, 1846), p. 202.

<sup>5</sup>"Letters from Europe--No. VI," ibid., p. 527.

<sup>6</sup>In Antioch the Railway Depot while holding three thousand could not accommodate the crowds. See Alexander Campbell, "An Excursion of Sixteen Hundred Miles," M. H., Vol. III, No. VII (July, 1853), p. 406.

<sup>7</sup>John Augustus Williams, Life of Elder John Smith with some account of the Rise and Progress of the current Reformation (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1904), p. 131.

<sup>8</sup>"Our Tour to the Far West--No. I," M. H., Vol. III, No. II (February, 1846), p. 70.

windows."<sup>9</sup> In conventions he spoke with "as many thousands as could satisfactorily hear the voice of one man."<sup>10</sup>

His notes repeated like a broken record that in city after city he had delivered a certain number of addresses to "large and attentive auditories,"<sup>11</sup> "to one of the largest assemblies I have ever seen in that city,"<sup>12</sup> to "the largest congregation we had till then addressed east of the Blue Ridge,"<sup>13</sup> "to immense auditories in the largest Hall in this city,"<sup>14</sup> etc.

Mark Twain told of Campbell's coming to Hannibal, Missouri and of the excitement among the farmers who came from miles around to get a glimpse of him. He confirmed that:

When he preached in a church, many had to be disappointed, for there was no church that would begin to hold all the applicants; so in order to accommodate all, he preached in the open air in the public square, and that was the first time in my life that I

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<sup>9</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Tour of Forty Days, etc. No. II," M. H., Vol. I, No. II (February, 1851), p. 78.

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Ohio Meetings," M. H., Vol. I, No. X (October, 1851), p. 599.

<sup>11</sup>"Letters to my Co-editors," ibid., p. 219.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>13</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to the South--No. I," M. H., Vol. II, No. VI (June, 1845), p. 244.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe--No. XII," M. H., Vol. IV, No. XI (November, 1847), p. 618.

realized what a mighty population this planet contains when you get them all together.<sup>15</sup>

As a convention speaker, Campbell addressed throngs of eager listeners. The early sermon that instigated much of his future course, the historic "Sermon on the Law," was delivered to the combined representatives of thirty-three Baptist churches in the Redstone Baptist Association. More than a thousand were in attendance with some twenty-two preachers.<sup>16</sup> In his growing popularity it was not long until, like in the 1839 yearly meeting of the Disciples in Cuyohoga County of Ohio, the audience was beyond five thousand.<sup>17</sup>

Even in Europe where a "Disciples' meeting house" might contain eight hundred at the morning worship hour on the Lord's Day, two thousand five hundred would gather in the evenings of the week at a larger hall.<sup>18</sup> Hundreds were said to have left upon such occasions, finding no

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<sup>15</sup>Mark Twain's Autobiography, Vol. II, (Harper and Brothers Company, 1924) Reprinted by Clara Clemens Samosoud as quoted by Perry Epler Gresham, "Alexander Campbell-Schoolmaster," in The Sage of Bethany--A Pioneer in Broadcloth (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960), p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 469-470.

<sup>17</sup>Amos Sutton Hayden, Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve, Ohio (Cincinnati: Chase and Hall, 1875), p. 390.

<sup>18</sup>Alexander Campbell, "European Tour," M. H., Vol. IV, No. IX (September, 1847), p. 515.

admission possible.<sup>19</sup> More than once alarm was expressed that over-crowded galleries might collapse.<sup>20</sup> Campbell made the sage observation regarding those engaged in the nineteenth century reformation:

The ears of the people are greedy; and  
were the desire to do equal to the  
desire to know, we would certainly be  
the most exemplary people in the world.<sup>21</sup>

Nothing dampened the ardor of the Disciples, unless it was the disagreeable rain<sup>22</sup> that in some areas did come down with enough vehemence to cut into the attendance of a people that walked or drove a horse-carriage miles to meeting. Enthusiastic requests for Campbell's visit promised: "rain or shine, we should be thronged."<sup>23</sup> The agreement was kept most of the time. It is understandable, however, when

<sup>19</sup>"A. Campbell's First Public Lecture in Edinburgh," British Millennial Harbinger, Vol. I (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1848), p. 252.

<sup>20</sup>Alexander Campbell, "An Excursion of Sixteen Hundred Miles," M. H., Vol. III, No. VII (July, 1853), p. 402; "Notes on a Tour, etc.--No. III," M. H., Vol. II, No. I (January 3, 1831), p. 26.

<sup>21</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Tour of Forty Days, etc. No. II," M. H., Vol. I, No. II (February, 1851), p. 81.

<sup>22</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to New York--No. III," M. H., Vol. IV, No. XII (December, 1833), p. 598. cp. "No. II," (November, 1833), p. 584 and "No. I," (October, 1833), p. 581.

<sup>23</sup>John Allen Gano, "News from the Churches," M. H., Vol. III, No. X (October, 1839), p. 469.

W. K. Pendleton had to record "The evening....rainy, the audience small, and the discourse admirable."<sup>24</sup>

The size of Campbell's audiences was not as significant as the make-up of them. In spreading the principles of reform, he did not forget that the church was "essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one,"<sup>25</sup> and that his co-workers, while "Christians only," were not the only Christians. To his meetings came preachers and other Christians from most all the major sects.<sup>26</sup> He had been the defender of the total Christian cause in a debate with the skeptic Robert Owen and the champion of all Protestant-Christianity when he engaged the Roman Bishop (later Archbishop) Purcell.

In community after community the denominational churches were open to him--Methodist,<sup>27</sup> Presbyterian,<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup>"Letter from W. K. Pendleton," M. H., Vol. I, No. V (May, 1858), p. 246.

<sup>25</sup>Thomas Campbell, Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington (Washington, (Pa.): Printed by Brown and Sample, at the office of "The Reporter," 1809).

<sup>26</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to Eastern Virginia--No II," M. H., Vol. VI, No. III (March, 1856), p. 139; "An Excursion of Sixteen Hundred Miles," M. H., Vol. III, No. VII (July, 1853), p. 401; "An Excursion to New York," M. H., Vol. VI, No. XI (November, 1856), p. 653.

<sup>27</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Tour of Forty Days in the State of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana--No. II," M. H., Vol. I, No. II (February, 1851), pp. 77, 80; "Our Tour to the Far West--No. I," M. H., Vol. III, No. II (February, 1846), p. 71.

<sup>28</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Tour of Forty Days--No. I," Vol.

Baptist,<sup>29</sup> Unitarian,<sup>30</sup> Episcopal,<sup>31</sup> Universalist,<sup>32</sup> and the "good 'auld Kirk o' Scotland."<sup>33</sup> Even the "Jerusalem Temple" (i.e. synagogue) was offered him as a platform.<sup>34</sup> Human nature being what it was and clerical jealousy being a possibility, it was not unthinkable when the rare record appeared: "We found the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches locked up, and St. Peter in possession of the keys."<sup>35</sup>

Besides being often interdenominational in texture, the audience of Campbell was occasionally interracial.

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I, No. I (January, 1851), p. 19; "Our Tour to the West--No. II," M. H., Vol. III, No. IV (April, 1846), p. 205.

<sup>29</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to Eastern Virginia--No. IV," M. H., Vol. VI, No. V (May, 1856), p. 290; "Notes on a Tour to Canada West--No. I," M. H., Vol. V, No. IX (September, 1853), p. 533.

<sup>30</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to New York--No. III," M. H., Vol. IV, No. XII (December, 1833), p. 600; "Letters from Europe--No. IX," M. H., Vol. IV, No. X (October, 1847), p. 553.

<sup>31</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 244; Alexander Campbell, "Incidents on a Tour to the South--No. V," M. H., Vol. III, No. V (May, 1839), p. 198.

<sup>32</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 392; Symon Frayzer, "The Church in Richmond, Virginia," M. H., Vol. III, No. X (October 1, 1832), p. 525.

<sup>33</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe--No. XII," M. H., Vol. IV, No. XI (November, 1847), p. 618.

<sup>34</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to New York--No. V," M. H., Vol. V, No. I (January, 1834), p. 38.

<sup>35</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour, etc.--No. III," M. H., Vol. II, No. I (January 3, 1831), p. 24.



Sometimes he spoke with entirely colored congregations.<sup>36</sup>  
 At other times he taught a mixed audience in "separate but equal" facilities, although in the same room. In Louisiana the record was kept:

A considerable colored population attended our meeting there, to whom was allotted one entire range of pews from the pulpit to the door, while the white population occupied three ranges of pews of the same length. The seats of both classes were alike cushioned, and no difference appeared, excepting the more fervent devotion.<sup>37</sup>

There were other forms of partial segregation at that time. In some places in what Campbell termed "Methodistic style" young ladies were divided from the young men.<sup>38</sup> In other places, due entirely to circumstances, husbands and families were separated as gentlemen gave their seats to the ladies and retired to stand outside a door or window.<sup>39</sup>

Another interesting fact about the crowd that hurried to hear Campbell was neither the age and sex mixture, racial mixture, nor religious mixture; but the coming

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<sup>36</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to the South--No. V," M. H., Vol. III, No. V (May, 1839), p. 201.

<sup>37</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to the South--No. I," M. H., Vol. VII, No. VI (June, 1857), p. 313.

<sup>38</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour in Illinois," M. H., Vol. VII, No. XII (December, 1857), p. 706.

<sup>39</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to Illinois--No. III," M. H., Vol. IV, No. I (January, 1854), p. 48; H. Hussey, "A Visit to Elder A. Campbell at Bethany," M. H., Vol. IV, No. XI (November, 1854), p. 648.

together of men of no education and those of the highest education. Lawyers and Judges came to witness his extraordinary dialectic power,<sup>40</sup> schooled clerics to gain an advanced learning in scriptural studies, presidents and cabinet members to hear a reasonable presentation of the gospel.<sup>41</sup> Teachers, physicians, editors, men of intellect came to be stimulated by one of the finest minds of the nineteenth century. And, yet, the common people heard him gladly. As D. S. Burnet reminisced before Bethany College at the loss of their President: "the stream flowed on until every little goblet and great vase....was filled."<sup>42</sup>

In this chapter we have dealt to this point with the audience as it appeared to the physical eye. To a Biblically saturated mind, such as Campbell's, what was perceived beyond what the eye could see? In the variety of people congregated, what was the common nature of man as man? The preacher must understand the man to whom he spoke before he could understand his mission to mankind.

While the politician regards man rather as a subject of taxation; the merchant,

<sup>40</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 91.

<sup>41</sup>Selina Huntington Campbell, Home Life and Reminiscences, p. 448; W. K. Pendleton, "Notes on a Tour for Bethany College," M. H., Vol. I, No. III (March, 1858), p. 157.

<sup>42</sup>"In Memoriam," M. H., Vol. XXXVII, No. VII (July, 1866), p. 317.

as an article of trade; the naturalist, as a mere animal, governed by appetite and passion; while each profession regards him in reference to itself; the physician, as a patient; the lawyer as a client; the priest, as a tithable; the Christian preacher regards him as God's prodigal son, the fallen child of his love; as yet capable of immortality under a remedial constitution, and his soul travails for his salvation. He remembers what he once was, and well he knows that the faith which has purified his heart and enabled him to overcome the world....can transform another, <sup>43</sup> lion into a lamb, another raven into a dove.

For a prodigal to be brought home from the far country, he needs someone to lead him to a restoration of his senses. He must be made to think. One Elijah with convincing evidence was considered more effective than four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal who vociferously might wear out their lungs and zealously spill their blood to win an allegiance to their cause.<sup>44</sup> The Christian gospel was a message from the mind of God to the mind of man. Enlightening the human understanding was "God's chartered way to the heart."<sup>45</sup> The model sermons in the book of Acts

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<sup>43</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Preacher--No. I," M. H., Vol. III, No. I (January 2, 1832), p. 27.

<sup>44</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermons to Young Preachers," C. B., Vol. VII, No. II (September 7, 1829), pp. 44-47.

<sup>45</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Religion of Excitement, and the Excitement of Religion," M. H., Vol. III, No. I (January, 1839), p. 34.

were not enthusiastic appeals to the passions. They were devoid of "declamation, noise, tinselling, painting, and mincing" and were all "logic, reason, point, testimony, proof."<sup>46</sup>

Men were to be appealed to through their intellects and brought back to good, common-sense. A sermon's purpose was to instruct and convince with irresistible logic. It was to tell the hearer why the speaker believed in, and loved the Lord Jesus. Campbell argued:

All who either tell or proclaim in a pulpit or on a chair, their own convictions and feelings, doubts, fears, and hopes, preach themselves or their feelings, instead of Jesus Christ. I presume a pious Mussulman could narrate his feelings, doubts, extacies (sic), and joys in "the Prophet Mahomet (sic)."<sup>47</sup> But he who could expect to convert others to any faith by such a course, calculates very largely upon the ignorance and weakness of his audience. All evidences are addressed to the higher and more noble faculties of man. The understanding, and not the passions, is addressed; and therefore an appeal to the latter, before the former is enlightened, is as unphilosophic as it is unscriptural. As the helm guides the ship, and the bridle the horse, so reason is the governing principle in man. Now in preaching Jesus arguments are to be used--and these are found in the testimony of God. To declare that testimony, and to adduce the evidences which support it, is to proclaim the gospel.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Preacher-No. IV," M. H., Vol. III, No. VII (July 2, 1832), p. 310.

<sup>47</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermons to Young Preachers--No. III," C. B., Vol. VII, No. VIII (March 1, 1830), p. 184.

In this quotation we notice that an appeal to the passions "before" the understanding was addressed was what Campbell considered "unphilosophic" and "unscriptural." An appeal to emotion was to be subsidiary to intellectual appeal. Otherwise a man's faith would be founded not on solid rock but on a balloon<sup>48</sup>--upon feeling and imagination.<sup>49</sup> The legitimate role of the feelings was to ignite --as a spark ignites a fire--the carefully laid facts that had been placed log-like in the mind. A sermon in Campbellian style would be a clear statement of forceful reasons for believing in Jesus as Christ and savior, followed with a fervent appeal to commit one's life to Him. As Campbell remarked during the Owen debate:

When men have reasoned very strongly and carried a point by a very powerful attack upon the human understanding, they may be allowed to slacken the reins upon the passions, and make some appeal to the hearts or feelings of the audience.<sup>50</sup>

Good preaching, in Campbell's book, steered the course between Calvinism which aimed "too much at the

<sup>48</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Bethany College," M. H., Vol. I, No. IV (April, 1858), p. 213.

<sup>49</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Our Visit to Nashville," M. H., Vol. V, No. II (February, 1855), p. 103.

<sup>50</sup>Alexander Campbell, ed., Debate on the Evidences of Christianity: Containing an Examination of the "Social System," And of all the Systems of Scepticisms of Ancient and Modern Times, (Bethany, Va.: Alexander Campbell, 1829), p. 463.

head" and Arminianism that addressed too much "the passions." Good preaching followed the apostolic gospel which simultaneously addressed "the understanding, the conscience, and the heart."<sup>51</sup> While Campbell was not as emotional in his teaching as the communities were used to and many individuals wished; he wanted the record clear that he was not against the emotion that led to devotion. He opposed the all-emotion that under revivalists produced a commotion. This caused men to howl, tremble and jump,<sup>52</sup> or dogs to bark, children to cry, birds to sing and sinners to tremble.<sup>53</sup> He wrote:

Let no one hence infer that we are opposed to feeling. God forbid! A religion without feeling is a body without a spirit. A religion that does not reach the heart and rouse all our feelings into admiration, gratitude, love and praise, is a mere phantom. But we make feelings the effect, not the cause of faith and of true religion. We begin not with feelings, but with the understanding; we call upon men first to believe, then to feel, and then to act. The gospel takes the whole man--the head, the heart, the hand; and he only is a genuine Christian who believes, feels, and obeys from the heart the whole mould of doctrine delivered to us by the holy Apostles.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Response to Dr. Humphrey's Letters--No. IV," M. H., Vol. VII, No. VIII (August, 1850), p. 434.

<sup>52</sup>An Observer, "Methodistic Enthusiasm--No. II," M. H., Vol. II, No. I (January, 1845), p. 11.

<sup>53</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Modern Proselytism--No. II," M. H., Vol. V, No. VII (July, 1841), p. 306.

<sup>54</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Incidents on a Tour to the S.--No. I," M. H., Vol. III, No. I (January, 1839), p. 12.

It is true that Campbell was not boisterous in the pulpit. Nevertheless, he spoke with "an earnestness often rising into impassioned utterance."<sup>55</sup> His sermon notes and editorials were frequently marked with exclamation points and proved to be devotional exercises as well as reasons and arguments. A man as sedate as Henry Clay (and as determined as he was, being debate moderator, to avoid the appearance of favoring one debater over the other) was so captivated by the reasoned argument of Campbell that he leaned forward, bowed assent and waved approval.<sup>56</sup> Dr. Heman Humphrey, former President of Amherst College, upon hearing Campbell quote the twenty-fourth Psalm ("Lift up your heads, O ye gates") said, "I cannot, in justice refrain from acknowledging that I never remember to have listened to, or to have read a more thrilling outburst of sacred eloquence."<sup>57</sup> As a hearer, Campbell himself, could be moved emotionally. He shouted "Glory to God in the highest!" as he listened to Walter Scott's oration in a grove near Wheeling, Virginia.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Isaac Errett, editor of the Christian Standard, quoted by Archibald McLean, Alexander Campbell, as a Preacher (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), p. 17.

<sup>56</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 514.

<sup>57</sup>"Dr. Heman Humphrey's Letters--No. I," M. H., Vol. VII, No. V (May, 1850), pp. 273-274.

<sup>58</sup>1830.

The nature of the mission to bring man to faith and build him up in that faith, was determined by the nature of man and how he came to belief. Faith, to Campbell, was nothing but the belief in the testimony of credible witnesses. It came only "by receiving the testimony of another as true."<sup>59</sup> In the words of Paul faith came "by hearing." As you could not see without light, you could not believe without testimony.<sup>60</sup> Any human being that could think could believe. In the place of bewilderment, darkness and mystery regarding a faith miraculously placed in the heart by the Holy Spirit's unpredictable working; Campbell substituted the dependable observation that as testimony to an event followed that event, faith in the witness borne, came after a well authenticated testimony. Almost all our knowledge of anything past or present was derived in man by faith in testimony. Campbell said, "Testimony is only another name for the experience of others."<sup>61</sup>

Christianity as a revelation had to do with the incarnation, an event of history. Like any other historical happening in time and space, eye-witnesses had called to

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<sup>59</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Patriarchal Age--No. VI," C. B., Vol. VI, No. VI (January 5, 1829), p. 140.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>61</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to New York--No. VI," M. H., Vol. V, No. II (February, 1834), p. 78.



our attention certain facts about Jesus--his birth, person, offices, mission, words and works. We could assent intellectually to a dogma, a proposition, a theory or a speculation. We might either believe or disbelieve testimony and obey or disobey precepts.<sup>62</sup> All history was testimony. It was the narrative of what happened. It was to events or facts that testimony was borne. Therefore, it was not the believing of a man that had saving power, it was that in which he believed.<sup>63</sup>

Evangelical Protestantism in Campbell's time distinguished "historic faith" from "saving faith." Campbell saw faith to be all of one kind:

That error is, that the nature or power and saving efficacy of faith is not in the truth believed, but in the nature of our faith, or in the manner of believing the truth. Hence all that unmeaning jargon about the nature of faith, and all those disdainful sneers at what is called "historic faith"--as if there could be any faith without history, written or spoken. Who ever believed in Christ without hearing

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<sup>62</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Doctrine Not Faith--No. I," M. H., Vol. II, No. XI (November, 1859), p. 641, op. Alexander Campbell, "Is Christianity a System?" M. H., Vol. V, No. II (February, 1862), p. 77.

<sup>63</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from the Senior Editor," M. H., Vol. II, No. VII (July, 1859), p. 380.

the history of him....Faith never can be more than the receiving of testimony as true.<sup>64</sup>

The all-permeating and prevailing idea in secular and sectarian Christendom, seems to be,--that right thinking, right feeling, right believing are paramount and all-engrossing concerns, not seeming to recognize that the illuminating, sanctifying, regenerating influence is not in the act of believing, feeling, or thinking,--but in the fact, act, event, person or thing accredited--perceived, received, and relied upon.<sup>65</sup>

Christian faith was faith in a person--"a hearty reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ for that salvation which he came into the world and died upon the cross to procure for lost sinners,"<sup>66</sup>--a confidence in a person, the admiration of a person, and a sincere devotion to his will."<sup>67</sup> Examination of the evidence was all God asked and all that was necessary to faith. But to exhort men to believe

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<sup>64</sup>Alexander Campbell, The Christian System: In Reference to the Union of Christians, and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity, as Plead in the Current Reformation, p. 94. Campbell reprinted in the Christian Baptist St. Anthony of Padua, Italy's "A Sermon to Fish," commenting that modern sermons often addressed men as if they were but fish and incapable of being moved by testimony. See Vol. I, No. V (December 1, 1823), p. 96.

<sup>65</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Faith, Hope, Love," M. H., Vol. I, No. V (May, 1858), p. 382.

<sup>66</sup>Quotation from Campbell's sermon on Romans 10:4 (April 7, 1811) in Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 376.

<sup>67</sup>Alexander Campbell, "An Excursion of Sixteen Hundred Miles," M. H., Vol. III, No. VII (July, 1853), p. 405.

"without submitting evidence" would be as "absurd as to try to build a house or plant a tree in a cloud."<sup>68</sup>

Was this, in fact, leaving out the Holy Spirit in the conversion process? It was rather obviating the way by which God worked "faith in the heart by his Holy Spirit" through "the belief of testimony."<sup>69</sup> He affirmed that "in conversion and sanctification the Spirit of God" operated "only through the Word of Truth."<sup>70</sup> In opposition to those who preached the Holy Spirit, rather than preaching Christ through the use of the sword of the Spirit, Campbell plead:

To hear many of the moderns, who profess to preach the word, talk of it as they do, and represent it as a dead and inefficient letter, is enough to provoke the meekness of a Moses, or to awaken the indignation of a Paul. The voice of God spoke the universe into being from the womb of nothing. The same voice recreates the soul of man, and the same voice will awaken the dead at the last day. His voice, heard or read, is equally adapted to the ends proposed. Some look for another call, a more powerful call than the written gospel presents. They talk of an inward call, of hearing the voice of God in their souls. But what greater power can the voice of God in the soul have, or what greater power can this inward call have,

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<sup>68</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Extracts from My Sentimental Journal," C. B., Vol. I, No. IX (April 5, 1824), p. 173.

<sup>69</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Reply," C. B., Vol. II, No. IX (April 4, 1825), p. 179.

<sup>70</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Tracts for the People--No. XXXIV," M. H., Vol. VI, No. VII (July, 1849), p. 370.

than the outward call, or the voice of God, echoed by the Apostles? God's voice is only heard now in the gospel. The gospel is now the only word of God, or will of God--the only proclamation and command addressed to the human race. 'Tis in this word of God his Spirit operates upon men and not out of it.<sup>71</sup>

The Christian mission was to bring men to trust in Christ--to have confidence in him as a person. This goal was reached through testimony--the testimony of the apostles, presently recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. The Holy Spirit used that witness to bring about the change in man essential to his salvation. As certainly as testimony preceded faith, fruit followed it. Religious affections sprang from faith.

Campbell illustrated this with the grief that might come upon the learning of a friend's drowning. The order was essentially: the drowning, then the report of it to another, then the belief of the report, and, finally the grief at that point of belief. From cause to effect, it was fact, testimony, belief, grief.<sup>72</sup> There could be no exceptions to that order. In preaching to the world then there was "a proper beginning and a proper ending." He affirmed:

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<sup>71</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Voice of God and the Word of God," M. H., Vol. I, No. III (March, 1830), p. 126.

<sup>72</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Confirmation of the Testimony," M. H., Vol. I, No. I (January, 1830), p. 9.

The order of things in this philosophy is, first, the testimony of God; then, faith in that testimony; then, repentance; then, baptism and prayer; then, peace, and hope, and joy, and love, then, all good works.<sup>73</sup>

This means that preaching was an address to man's understanding in which the speaker narrated the wonderful works of God in Christ. He stated, illustrated and proved the gospel facts. He testified not only what God had done, but what he had promised and threatened. He persuaded the hearers to surrender to the guidance and direction of God's Son.<sup>74</sup> The man of the world needed only to hear the gospel. This gospel had the power to produce faith, to bring assurance of divine favor, and to produce the reformation of life.

Faith to bear holy fruit had to be faith in Christ. The preaching that produced faith in Christ was the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Campbell was disturbed by his critics who thought the preaching of the Holy Spirit<sup>75</sup> was preaching Christ and that Campbell was derelict for not in every sermon telling how bad he once was and how good he had become. That kind of preaching, Campbell felt, pointed the

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<sup>73</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Converting Power," M. H., Vol. IV, No. X (October, 1833), p. 496.

<sup>74</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Word to the Moral Regenerators of this Age," M. H., Vol. VI, Extra (August 5, 1833), p. 380.

<sup>75</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Campbelism," M. H., Vol. VI, No. II (February, 1856), p. 109.

hearer's mind within to his own heart, rather than up to Jesus the author of salvation.<sup>76</sup> Preaching about the gospel--even on such themes as repentance, baptism, remission of sins and eternal life<sup>77</sup> was not preaching the gospel; even as a medical lecture on a certain cure was not the same as offering the medicine. Preaching "faith" was not proclaiming "the faith." Aiming at a reform in dress and manners was not effecting the change of views, affections, state and life that constituted conversion.<sup>78</sup> Getting the hearers to fall in love with a peculiar religious system, was not inducing sinners to give themselves up to Jesus.<sup>79</sup>

The man who came within the preacher's voice range was to be reached through the mind by the sufficient evidence in the Scriptures. Whoever called on the name of the Lord would be saved; but the calling would follow believing, and the believing would commence at hearing, and preaching would initiate it all; if it was the preaching of Christ

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<sup>76</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Mr. Robert Owen and the Social System. No. I," C. B., Vol. IV, No. IX (April 2, 1827), p. 192.

<sup>77</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Synopsis of Reformation Principles and Objects," M. H., Vol. I, No. XII (December, 1837), p. 535.

<sup>78</sup>Alexander Campbell, The Christian System, p. 44.

<sup>79</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Preacher--No. III," M. H., Vol. III, No. V (May, 1832), p. 230.

to an unbelieving world.

But, said the Reformer:

So long as the notion obtains that clergymen are created, made, and ordained to dispense ordinances, to Christen infants, to confirm children, to marry adults, to dispense the sacrament, to pray for the sick, to preach funeral sermons, and march in funeral processions--to be Chaplains to armies, navies, and parliaments, and to write and pronounce sermons--we have infallible testimony that we are in the spiritual Babylonian Captivity.<sup>80</sup>

The messenger of the church had to first gaze at his audience to determine if he would be addressing prodigals or pupils--the world or the disciples of Christ. If the latter, he had to remember that the great commission admonished them to observe all that Christ commanded and that the Epistles of the New Covenant were addressed to none other than baptized believers. If the unconverted were before him, the teacher of saints became the preacher to sinners and announced the gospel facts and promises for the single purpose of leading the lost to faith in Jesus as the Christ the son of the living God and into the Christian family.

In either talking to an assembly of believers or to an assembly of unbelievers, what ought to be the nature

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<sup>80</sup>Alexander Campbell, "To Mr. William Jones, of London. Letter III," M. H., Vol. VI, No. II (February, 1835), p. 81.

of the address? What would be its substance and what ought to be characteristic of its delivery? The next chapter will look with Campbell into the Bible for a standard by which to measure the matter and manner of preaching.



## CHAPTER V

### MATTER AND MANNER

#### A Biblical Look at the Message

The druggist receives the physician's prescription. The pharmacist knows that he is to prepare the order using the precise ingredients asked in the exact amounts stated. It is not necessary to inform him that for this particular patient all the other drugs and medicines on the shelf are not to be included.

Campbell held that the single remedy for the world's ills, according to the prescription of the Great Physician, was the gospel. The shelves of Scripture were heavy-laden with many truths prescribed for disciples, but the prescription for the world and that for the church were not to be confused.

Before we consider the proper subject-matter for a congregation of saints, let us remind ourselves of the matter to be delivered to non-Christians.

To call for the preaching of the gospel to the unbelieving world, essentially limited every other consideration. This was important to recognize, for nothing else preached could have the redeeming effect of the gospel. Campbell believed:

When God, the omniscient, and the all-wise, selects any means for any end, reason must humbly bow to it as the best in the universe.<sup>1</sup>

To preach a creed was to take a "soul-alienating.... discord-making....strife-breeding course" that would "scatter the seeds of discord throughout."<sup>2</sup> Preaching the Christ brought men into the fold of Christ. Preaching a statement of faith led men into the fold of a party.<sup>3</sup> The former saved. The latter was impotent to convert sinners. As a matter of fact it had the effect of impeding the salvation of the world.<sup>4</sup>

It was not good stewardship when a preacher used time, labor and money to prove that which no matter how well

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Address to the Readers of the Christian Baptist," C. B., Vol. V, No. IX (April 7, 1828), p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Replication No. II To Spencer Clack," C. B., Vol. V, No. II (September 3, 1827), p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Preacher--No. VII," M. H., Vol. III, No. IX (September, 1832), p. 469.

<sup>4</sup>"To Dr. A. Straith," C. B., Vol. VII, No. V (December 5, 1829), p. 108.

proved, saved nor sanctified no man.<sup>5</sup> Campbell reasoned:

This is, with us, the controlling reason, the sovereign consideration why we should not waste our lives in such South Sea dreams--why we should not cultivate barren sands on the sea border, while our fertile hills and rich alluvial vallies (sic) are undressed and unsown, and consequently unproductive in the good fruits of righteousness and life. What wise financier would invest his capital in the stock of broken companies, where he must ultimately lose, not only the interest, but the principal also! So is every one--preacher....who fills the ears and the hearts of those to whom he ministers with untaught and unprofitable questions....and inoperative speculations....He invests his labors in profit. He does worse than he who buried his talent in the earth; for in that case he might have saved the principal; but in this, both principal and interest are lost for ever.<sup>6</sup>

Orthodoxy was no high and holy ambition. Campbell declared Satan to be "as orthodox as Gabriel."<sup>7</sup> It was not preaching the gospel to declare another man's "orthodoxy" to be "heterodoxy." The preacher was no God-appointed juror to bring verdicts on another man's views.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Reply to a Universal Discussion," M. H., Vol. III, No. I (January, 1839), p. 33.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Orthodoxy--No. II," M. H., Vol. VII, No. II (February, 1857), p. 76.

<sup>8</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour," C. B., Vol. III, No. V (December 5, 1825), p. 92.

Aylett Raines, for example, was not to be excluded from the Mahoning Association because of his views regarding the "restoration" of all men, while at the same time he was not to be permitted to propagate a divisive opinion. Since the aim of all that spoken to the world was their reconciliation to God, Campbell noted:

Proving tenets, exploding false theories or establishing the true, offering criticisms, discussing questions, resolving cases of conscience, or propounding principles of any sort, are no part of the work of converting sinners, or of preaching reformation to ungodly men....Therefore, conversion is a turning to the Lord--in order to which Christ must be preached, and nothing else.<sup>9</sup>

New Testament evangelists, like Philip, preached "Jesus." No theory of humanity nor of divinity were given. No doctrine of "total depravity," nor of "regeneration" were argued.<sup>10</sup> Christ was preached rather than a theory concerning Christ; for a new life, and not a new formula of doctrine, was the world's need.<sup>11</sup> "Christianity" was not Philip's theme. "Jesus" was. Also, to preach

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<sup>9</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters to England," M. H., Vol. I, No. VII (July, 1837), pp. 317-318.

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Tour to Eastern Virginia," M. H., Vol. VI, No. II (February, 1856), p. 83.

<sup>11</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes of Incidents in a Tour Through Illinois and Missouri--No. II," M. H., Vol. III, No. II (February, 1853), p. 68.

"regeneration" in order to produce regeneration was "as preposterous as the preaching of a resurrection in a graveyard to the ashes of the dead."<sup>12</sup>

Since the words of the Bible as well as the thoughts of the Bible were Holy Spirit guided, the preacher ought to be content with "the inspired symbols of evangelical ideas, as selected by the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation."<sup>13</sup> He ought to preach the gospel "as did the old Apostles, who were neither Calvinists, Arminians, Trinitarians, Unitarians, or any thing else but the followers of Christ."<sup>14</sup> Campbell reported:

There is something in the matter and manner of our preaching very different from any thing which we heard in Britain or Ireland....we begin at the day of Pentecost and speak from that book as if we had lived before Augustine, or Tertullian, or Origen, or Justin Martyr, or before the Protestant reformers were born.<sup>15</sup>

It was Campbell's desire that metaphysically-true dogmas, which came forth as distilled truths from

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<sup>12</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Means of Regeneration--No. II, Response," M. H., Vol. VI, No. II (February, 1856), p. 69.

<sup>13</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Tracts for Ireland--No. II," M. H., Vol. III, No. IX (September, 1853), p. 500.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letter to William Jones," M. H., Vol. V, No. XI (December, 1834), p. 586.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 587.

Arminian and Calvinistic distilleries,<sup>16</sup> be replaced by Christ's gospel in Biblical terms. He hoped that schools of scholastic theology (where, in the words of a Harbinger contributor with the pen-name SILAS, there was preaching and prayer "as formal as a Quaker's coat, and as cold as December")<sup>17</sup> would be replaced by Bible chairs in every college where the Scriptures would be taught as sacred history.<sup>18</sup>

It is no wonder that if religious opinion was not the proper material for a gospel sermon, neither was political opinion. Campbell could care enough about social reform to be an active<sup>19</sup> delegate to the (1829) Virginia convention called to amend the State constitution. Yet, when he preached every night during the three-month session

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<sup>16</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Essays. On the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Salvation of Men. No. VIII," C. B., Vol. II, No. VIII (March 7, 1825), p. 151.

<sup>17</sup>SILAS, "The Crisis--No. IV," M. H., Vol. I, No. VI (June, 1844), p. 272.

<sup>18</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Excursion to Baltimore and Washington City," M. H., Vol. VII, No. VII (July, 1850), p. 408.

<sup>19</sup>Harold L. Lunger points out that of the ninety-six delegates, Campbell was considered one of the six important enough to be included in the Catlin picture of the Virginia Convention. The others were Monroe, Madison, Marshall, Philip Pendleton, and John Randolph. See "Alexander Campbell's Political Activity and Views," in Perry Epler Gresham, ed., The Sage of Bethany: A Pioneer in Broadcloth (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960), p. 155.

in various churches in and near Richmond, his left-ward political opinions were not even whispered from the pulpit. Campbell could argue against John Marshall and John Randolph as he dreamed of slavery's abolition. Yet, when in Montrose, Scotland he could write his daughter Clarinda:

Some were super-excited, and came rather to hear us on the subject of American slavery than on the gospel. We did not, however, gratify them, having a paramount object in our eye.<sup>20</sup>

Campbell could plead before literary societies for the equal education of women and also for a universal education: yet, like Daniel Webster, he did not believe preachers should "take their texts from St. Paul and preach from the newspapers."<sup>21</sup> Campbell could see the "ignorance, poverty, and crime" abounding in the big cities.<sup>22</sup> But, he was convinced that the cure was not in turning "aside to electioneer for some great hero other than the Captain of our

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<sup>20</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe--No. XXVII," M. H., Vol. V, No. V (May, 1848), p. 272. When Mr. Robertson asked Campbell to speak on slavery in Edinburgh, he replied, "The Gospel, and Church, and not Slavery nor Abolition, were the objects of his mission." See Selina Huntington Campbell, Home Life and Reminiscences, pp. 379-380.

<sup>21</sup>Daniel Webster, "Choice Selections," M. H., Vol. III No. XII (December, 1853), p. 701.

<sup>22</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Incidents on a Tour to the South--No. II," M. H., Vol. III, No. II (February, 1839), p. 55.

salvation."<sup>23</sup>

More than once the Millennial Harbinger told the story of Dr. Chalmers' experience in his pastorate at Kilmany and his determination for the next ministry in Glasgow. In Kilmany for twelve years he had preached against "the pests and disturbers of human society." He pressed reformation of every kind among his people. But, he said, "I never once heard of any such reformation having been effected among them." He became convinced of the utter alienation of the heart from God. He also found the subordinate reformations for which he had earlier preached, coming as the consequence of preaching Christ's free offer of forgiveness. He confessed: "I am now sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues....had not the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners." Campbell, agreeing with Chalmers, concluded that to preach Christ was the only effective way of teaching morality. "Morality," he insisted, was "a fruit of the gospel--of gospel reconciliation to God and men."<sup>24</sup>

Negatively considered, to preach the gospel was not to preach theories, opinions, creeds, politics, orthodoxy or

<sup>23</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Political Reverends," M. H., Vol. VI, No. XII (December, 1835), p. 594.

<sup>24</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Dr. Chalmers' Experiment," M. H., Vol. IV, No. V (May, 1854), p. 272. See also Wayland and Campbell, "The Christian Ministry," M. H., Vol. IV, No. VI (June, 1854), p. 312.



even the Bible. Nor was it to preach the law. The gospel did not rest for its effectiveness upon the law being first preached. When Campbell preached his "Sermon on the Law" before the convention of Baptists, he lost many friends when, contrary to the popular view, he insisted that there was "no necessity for preaching the law in order to prepare men for receiving the gospel."<sup>25</sup> The great commission assigned the task of preaching the gospel, not the law. The apostles were constituted ministers of the New Testament, not the Old. The Book of Acts gave in all its sermons the approved precedent of preaching only the gospel, and not an instance of preparing Jew or Gentile by law-preaching.

The Holy Spirit of Truth was to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, not through the law of Moses but through the testimony of Christ. Campbell taught:

The eternal Father condemned sin in the person of his Son, more fully than it ever was, or could be, condemned in any other way. Suppose, for illustration, a king put to death his only son, in the most painful and ignominious way, for a crime against the government: would not this fact be the best means of convincing his subjects of the evil of the crime, and of the king's detestation of it? Would not this fact be better

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<sup>25</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," M. H., Vol. III, No. IX (September, 1846), p. 513.

than a thousand lectures upon the excellency of the law and the sanctions of it?<sup>26</sup>

At this teaching the Baptists protested that to follow Campbell at this point was heretical, licentious and "antinomian." To this he replied:

Blessed Jesus! art thou thus insulted by pretended friends? Are thy laws an inadequate rule of life? Guided by thy statutes will our lives be licentious, our morals loose, ourselves abandoned to all crime?<sup>27</sup>

Positively speaking, preaching the gospel was preaching Jesus--"his Divine and human personality, his official splendors, his august titles, his personal charms, his condescending grace and loveliness."<sup>28</sup> Gospel proclamation was "the simple declaration of the great facts of redemption--the things that man had done in his rebellion--and what God has done to redeem him."<sup>29</sup> It then enjoined upon man new

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<sup>26</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," M. H., Vol. III, No. IX (September, 1846), p. 513.

<sup>27</sup>Alexander Campbell, "'Address' to the Readers of the Christian Baptist--No. II," C. B., Vol. I, No. VI (January 5, 1824), p. 116.

<sup>28</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Church Edification," M. H., Vol. III, No. X (October, 1853), p. 543.

<sup>29</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Peter's Second Speech," M. H., Vol. III, No. IV (April, 1846), p. 231.

precepts that grew out of these facts with promises accompanying.

There are gospel facts to be believed--  
gospel precepts to be obeyed--and gospel  
promises to be enjoyed and hoped for--  
and a Saviour, to be loved, admired, and  
served.<sup>30</sup>

"Seven facts constituted the whole gospel,"<sup>31</sup>  
Campbell taught, referring to the birth, life, death,  
burial, resurrection, ascension, and coronation of Christ.  
The facts about his "person, mission, sacrifice and inter-  
cession"<sup>32</sup> were renovating in power. Concerning these  
facts the world needed to be informed, convinced and then  
exhorted to decide regarding Christ. The preacher's task  
was to produce the evidence that Jesus was the Son of God  
and the Saviour of sinners. To help other preachers at  
this task Campbell designed a brief volume The Christian  
Preacher's Companion or The Gospel Facts Sustained by the  
Testimony of Unbelieving Jews and Pagans.<sup>33</sup> This book grew

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<sup>30</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Peter's Second Speech," M. H.,  
Vol. III, No. IV (April, 1846), p. 231.

<sup>31</sup>Sermon preached by Alexander Campbell in November,  
1865 outlined by Robert Richardson in Memoirs, Vol. II,  
p. 655.

<sup>32</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Dr. Chalmer's Experiment,"  
M. H., Vol. IV, No. V (May, 1854), p. 273.

<sup>33</sup>(Centreville, Kentucky: Published for R. B. Neal,  
1891).

out of Campbell's own work at the preaching task. He was often reasoning with skeptics<sup>34</sup> to their enjoyment, and many times to their conversion.

Upon faith in Christ, reformation (or repentance) toward Christ and immersion into Christ, the convert was ready for teaching concerning all that Christ expected of him as a follower. While the preacher's message was as single as the gospel, the Christian teacher's topics were as broad as, but no more broad than, the Scriptures. To occupy the teacher were all the meanings of the gospel facts, all the implications of a life in Christ, all the rules for work and worship in the Epistles, all the information for our admonition from Adam to Moses, from Moses to the Messiah, and from Matthew to John.<sup>35</sup> These were proper topics for the comfort and edification of the church.

The teaching was to be more practical and exhortatory than explanatory and exegetical.<sup>36</sup> If Campbell's own teaching can be considered any standard for others, each

<sup>34</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on Incidents in a Tour Through Illinois and Missouri--No. III," M. H., Vol. III, No. III (March, 1853), p. 134.

<sup>35</sup>Campbell, thinking of God's dealings with men historically, uses such phrases as these rather than the typical, "from Genesis to Revelation."

<sup>36</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Importance of a Pure English Version of the Christian Scriptures," M. H., Vol. II, No. I (January, 1852), p. 16.

teaching was to be viewed against the backdrop of the whole Biblical revelation. Campbell had the reputation for perceiving the "vital principles of revelation in wide and expanded views."<sup>37</sup> He would not exhaust a phrase or a word. His sermons had scope and dimension. In the words of his biographer:

His grand generalizations of the wonderful facts of redemption opened up trains of reflection wholly new, and presented the subject of Christianity in a form so simple and yet so comprehensive as to fill everyone with admiration.<sup>38</sup>

Campbell was at the opposite pole from those "textuaries" who analyzed the words of a phrase with no attention to their place in a given book or in the Bible as a whole. On one occasion Campbell listened for forty-five minutes to a Presbyterian cleric, Dr. Blair, speaking on the line "Why will ye die, O house of Israel!" Campbell calculated the speaker's salary per sermon and concluded that, if that phrase of a verse cost the congregation twenty-six dollars, it would take \$1,300,000 and a thousand years to have the entire Bible explained to them.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Thomas W. Grafton, Alexander Campbell Leader of the Great Reformation of the Nineteenth Century (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1897), p. 180.

<sup>38</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 93.

<sup>39</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Extracts from My Sentimental Journal. No. III," C. B., Vol. II, No. XII (July 4, 1825), p. 248.

Whether a servant of the church was addressing men in the kingdom of darkness or the kingdom of light, the way of speaking would have a similarity even though the content would be dissimilar. In both confrontations Campbell believed the style should be conversational.

Riding along together with "Raccoon" John Smith, Campbell listened to Smith's observation of his preaching style: "You leaned upon your cane easily, though somewhat awkwardly, and talked as men commonly talk." Campbell replied that although he had studied the arts of elocution, he conscientiously refrained from their use. Then he pointed Smith to the apostolic manner:

Suppose that one of them should....have plied his arms in gesticulations, stamped his foot in vehemence, and declared his testimony....in a loud, stentorian voice?

Rather, Campbell said, there was "composure of manner, natural emphasis, and solemn deliberation."<sup>40</sup>

In the New Testament examples of preaching where men "so spake" that many hearers believed, the manner was not that of declamation. There was "no pomp nor pageantry of language--no fine lights of fancy--no embellishments of the rhetorical character."<sup>41</sup> There was "no effort to

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<sup>40</sup>J. A. Williams, Life of Elder John Smith, p. 133.

<sup>41</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Practical Thoughts and Reflections," M. H., Vol. IV, No. III, (March, 1847), p. 154.

soften the heart by melting tones, gentle cadences, or an impassioned mannerism."<sup>42</sup>

One learned to speak by speaking and in Campbell's daily routine there were constant conversations with family, student-body and friends. As he one time remarked, "Reading makes an intelligent man--writing a correct man--conversation a fluent man."<sup>43</sup> Campbell did read widely, he did write carefully and he did talk constantly. Always the voice was conversational whether talking to a large congregation or at an informal gathering around the hearth. Never was there a preaching-tone in the former situation and another tone for the latter occasion. He ridiculed divines who supposed that their tone of voice should differ from that of lawyers, statesmen and lecturers since in the cleric's opinion a sacred subject demanded a sacred tone.<sup>44</sup> He assured young preachers that "true gracefulness and dignity in a speech" was to be found in "the natural tone" and "the natural key."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Practical Thoughts and Reflections," M. H., Vol. IV, No. III (March, 1847), p. 154.

<sup>43</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Good Library," M. H., Vol. V, No. X (October, 1834), p. 490.

<sup>44</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermons to Young Preachers--No. III," C. B., Vol. VII, No. VIII (March 1, 1830), p. 184.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Vol. VII, No. II (September 7, 1829), p. 46.

As one might expect, conversational preaching, to Campbell, had the air of dialogue, not monologue. He encouraged audience participation; and, besides anticipating questions that he answered in the sermons, he often allowed for question and answer periods either immediately following the message or at the next opportunity.<sup>46</sup> In this he followed the same principles as he had in the Millennial Harbinger where he permitted "arguments for and against" all his positions to be heard.<sup>47</sup> It was his conviction that teaching Christ, like teaching all other subjects, was more effectively accomplished through teacher-pupil conversation. He included in his journal an article to this point by a contributor who signed his work with the initial "N."

If a professor of any other science than the science of religion were to pretend to instruct his class merely by lecturing to it, he would be turned off as one that did but half his duty. The church, in this respect, ought not to differ from the college.<sup>48</sup>

His reform rested upon getting people to think for themselves. His defeat would be for the people to be persuaded

<sup>46</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 338-339.

<sup>47</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Prefatory Remarks," M. H., Vol. III, No. I (January, 1853), p. 3.

<sup>48</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Use and Abuse of Preaching," M. H., Vol. III, No. V (May, 1846), p. 25.



by clerics to let clergymen do the thinking in religion for the members.<sup>49</sup>

For a sermon to be truly conversational, it ought, also, to be delivered in an extemporaneous manner. In the beginning of Campbell's ministry, following standards he had set for himself, he wrote a sermon (three to be exact) in full and committed it (them) to memory. When later he committed himself to the Bible standard for method of delivery as well as message to be delivered; this all changed. What apostle read to those gathered his own sermon or one purchased from another? Would Peter have been speechless if one day his sermon had been misplaced in the saddle-bag?<sup>50</sup> Could Paul not have prayed with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, if the written prayer in his pocket had been lost?<sup>51</sup>

Extemporaneous speaking was more than Biblical, it was the superior mode of speaking.

Our words react upon ourselves according to their importance, and hence, we are sometimes wrought up to a pathos, a fervor, an ecstasy, indeed, by the mysterious sound

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<sup>49</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Conclusion of Vol. IV," M. H., Vol. IV, No. XII (December, 1833), p. 621.

<sup>50</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Dropped Letter," C. B., Vol. II, No. I (August 2, 1824), pp. 20-21.

<sup>51</sup>"Extemporaneous Preaching," Richmond Christian Advocate quoted in M. H., Vol. I, No. II (February, 1844), p. 71.

of our own voice upon ourselves, as well as that of others, to which we never could have ascended without it. Hence the superior eloquence of extemporaneous speaking over that of those who read or recite what they have coolly (sic) or deliberately thought at some time and in some other place.<sup>52</sup>

Describing his shift from the writing and memorization of sermons to the freedom of talking freely to the audience; Campbell said that in his first efforts in the pulpit he "felt as embarrassed as one corseted." He sensed being cramped. In preaching attempts number two and three he had a few notes and interspersed extemporaneous comments between what he had written. This brought the sense of putting a new patch on an old garment making the rent worse.<sup>53</sup> From then on, while his messages were well-prepared in the organization of his thought, they were entirely extemporaneous.

Campbell had an aversion both to writing sermons and to reading them to the public. Yet, how much worse it would be to hide the written sermon in a Bible, or a black book the size of the Bible. This would lead the hearers to believe the lie that no notes were used. Such

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<sup>52</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Anglo-Saxon Languages," Popular Lectures and Addresses (Philadelphia: James Challen and Son, 1861), p. 19.

<sup>53</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Short Sermons for Business Men," M. H., Vol. IV, No. I (January, 1861), p. 31.

would be unbecoming. This he called "Pulpit Dishonesty," in an article for his paper, The Christian Baptist.<sup>54</sup> You would not read a manuscript in conversation to friends in the parlor. Why, then, not talk face to face, eye to eye and heart to heart with the audience of sinners or saints.

Only the determination to speak as the Apostles spoke, plus the gift of a very capable memory, allowed Campbell to address men extemporaneously. His sermons on a tour were of one and a half to three hours in length. Not many, if any, could do what Campbell did in the information-packed, "twelve hour," extemporaneous, debate-speech against Robert Owen.<sup>55</sup> Only important matter and an intriguing manner caused the auditors to think upon such occasions that they had listened to Campbell for no more than half-an-hour.<sup>56</sup>

A conversational sermon must not be an effort at

<sup>54</sup>Vol. I, No. X (May 3, 1824), p. 201.

<sup>55</sup>"It was, on our side, extemporaneous; on his, mainly premeditated and written out in extenso." Footnote by Alexander Campbell in Debate on the Evidences of Christianity: Containing an Examination of the "Social System." And of all the Systems of Scepticisms of Ancient and Modern Times (Bethany, Va.: Alexander Campbell, 1829), p. vii. The "twelve hour speech," filling 160 pages of the debate, was given in three days in two hour units (ten to twelve in the mornings, two to four in the afternoons).

<sup>56</sup>Archibald McLean, Alexander Campbell as a Preacher, p. 31.

eloquence. By that very fact it cannot fail to be truly eloquent. Instead of laboring to "gratify this Athenian itch,"<sup>57</sup> the Christian preacher should lay aside "the veil of what is falsely called eloquence"<sup>58</sup> and plainly present the testimony of God. The weapons of the world having no part in the armor of a Christian soldier,<sup>59</sup> let the eloquence within the churches of Christ be an eloquence in scripture doctrine, in argument, in exhortation, in all good works.<sup>60</sup>

This was the brand of oratory Editor W. T. Moore saw in Campbell when he prepared the "dedication" for Campbell's Familiar Lectures on the Pentateuch, which began:

To  
THE STUDENTS OF BETHANY COLLEGE,  
WHO HAVE LISTENED TO THE  
"OLD MAN ELOQUENT"<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Union," M. H., Vol. III, No. V (May, 1832), p. 194.

<sup>58</sup>Alexander Campbell's introduction to a printed sermon, quoted in Archibald McLean, Alexander Campbell as a Preacher, p. 30.

<sup>59</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A Word to the Moral Regenerators of this Age," M. H., Vol. II, No. VI (August, 1833), p. 381.

<sup>60</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe," M. H., Vol. IV, No. X (October, 1847), p. 551.

<sup>61</sup>W. T. Moore, ed., Familiar Lectures, p. 1.

Campbell's eloquence was an artless eloquence, for his every effort was only to be understood. His mind was on his subject and his object, not on himself.

After pooling together hints from contemporaries of Campbell in action, we see through their eyes and hear through their ears Campbell bringing an address:

His appearance is impressive, self-assuring and commanding. He stands six-feet tall and is vigorous and masculine as hard out-door work was certain to make him. His grey eyes flash out from beneath heavy brows and pierce deeply. His pleasant countenance radiates in contrast to the drab colored suit he wears. His voice is clear and ringing, his tone deep and melodious; his enunciation precise; his Scotch-brogue with a Yankee strain not detracting. He speaks with such rapidity, he denies the best stenographers a complete and accurate record of all he says.<sup>62</sup> Yet, even the foreign terms, pompous phrases or heavy vocabulary, seem natural to him and not frustrating to us.

His words are vivid and well-chosen though at times more extensive than his audience's ability to grasp. His figures of speech are primarily metaphors. His sentences are constructed properly and varied in both length and

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<sup>62</sup>Alexander Campbell, "A. Campbell's Orations. A letter to Brother Wallis," The Christian Messenger and Family Magazine, Vol. III (1847), p. 375.

kind. His style seems an effort at plainness rather than embellishment. Any gestures of emphasis and description are noticeable by their absence; but they are unnecessary because of the strong emphasis he lays on important words, and the exacting choice he has made of meaningful terms! He seems not to want the delivery of the message to call attention to itself. To him, the message is the all-important thing.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>See "Works by Disciples of Christ--On Alexander Campbell" in Bibliography, pp. 170-171, especially the books by Davies, Grafton, McLean and Richardson.

## PART TWO: ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: PREACHER OF REFORM

### CHAPTER I

#### MOLDS AND MODELS

##### A Look at His Background

Whoever sets up a standard for others, subjects himself to the judgment of others as to whether he lived up to his own high ideals. Paraphrasing Paul to the Romans in our questions to Campbell, we ask: "You that taught others, did you teach yourself? When you said not to adulterate a gospel sermon with pagan Athenian eloquence, were your teachings always chaste? You who forbade stealing another's message from some sermon-book and killing congregational interest by stumblingly reading it, are you without blemish concerning these charges?"

In Part Two of this study, we desire to look at Campbell as a preacher in the light of his proposed reform of preaching. Yet, prior to asking if he practiced what

he preached about preaching, we must examine the heritage and environment that made him what he was. We look at his background to find the models that inspired him and the molds that formed him into the outstanding teacher and preacher that the world proclaimed him to be.

Selina Huntington Campbell, in the book concerning her husband's Home Life<sup>1</sup> leads us to a major molding influence upon Campbell. We have reason to suspect that, like many a preacher's wife, the help-meet (with whom Alexander shared his innermost thoughts and before whose offspring he talked daily regarding eternal things) discussed with him sermonic thoughts before and after their public hearing. There is definite trace in letters to her husband that Selina had ideas about articles for the religious journal edited by Mr. Campbell.

Long before Alexander Campbell left father and mother to cleave to a wife, a home life of molding power was to be found in the manse of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Campbell. Alexander loved and admired, respected and followed, his Huguenot mother (Jane Corneigle) and Scottish father (Thomas Campbell). Their insistence that all children and domestics in their care were to memorize for recitation at least one Bible verse a day was, according to Alexander's

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<sup>1</sup>Home Life and Reminiscences of A. Campbell by His Wife (St. Louis: John Burns, Publisher, 1882).



confession,<sup>2</sup> a dominating factor in making him what he was. From his lips could flow not only chapters, but entire books of the Bible. Scriptural terminology was indelibly stamped into his mind.

Thomas Campbell was a capable and respected preacher in the Psalm-singing, Scotch Seceder Presbyterian Church. He followed with precision their homiletical rules. His son, Alexander, heard from him substantial preaching. In later years, after the son began to preach, the two of them would walk and talk all the way home from a church service testing each other's message for content, composition and arrangement according to the clerical standards of the Scotch Seceder ministry. The doctrine was to be that of the text and the divisions of the speech were to exhaust the subject. Alexander would not have felt robbed as had PHILIP (only signature used) writing in the Christian Baptist:

I have spent twenty years of my life under the noisy verbosity of a Presbyterian clergyman without receiving the least degree of light from the Holy Word of God.<sup>3</sup>

Once Alexander had committed his life to the ministry,

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<sup>2</sup>"The Verse-A-Day System The High Road to Heresy," M. H., Vol. III, No. VII (July, 1832), p. 313.

<sup>3</sup>"On Teaching Christianity--No. III," C. B., Vol. I, No. VI (January 5, 1824), p. 113.

Thomas charted the course of preparatory study, insisting upon at least six months of a most intensive study of the Bible.<sup>4</sup> While Alexander was not to neglect the study of other books, the one book in which he must of necessity be expert was the Bible. Until his death, Alexander made a daily personal searching of the Scriptures the essential element in the preacher's routine of life. "Like father, like son"--Alexander and Thomas both were biblical preachers; both generalized upon their topics and defined with brevity and accuracy the terms they used.<sup>5</sup> Alexander, never-the-less, went beyond his revered father for his highest ideal of what preaching ought to be. In freeing himself from denominational patterns, he could see that his father's old sermon manuscripts showed occasional traces of "scrap preaching" in the "old way of...worthy ancestors"<sup>6</sup> rather than the better way of apostolic precedent.

Thomas Campbell was not only Alexander's father and preacher, he was also his instructor in such subjects as

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<sup>4</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 275.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>6</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Texts and Textuary Divines," C. B., Vol. II, No. X (May 2, 1825), p. 189. In this article, Campbell recalls hearing at age fourteen a sermon by a Scotch preacher on "Malt." The acrostic called for a Metaphorical, Allegorical, Literal and Theological interpretation of texts and also dealt with Murder, Adultery, Lasciviousness and Treason with their resulting Misery, Anguish, Lamentation and Torment.

the Greek and Latin languages. When a shipwreck<sup>7</sup> created the opportunity of studying a year at the University of Glasgow before continuing the journey to America, Alexander followed in his father's footsteps once again by enrolling as a student there and by supporting himself through giving private instruction in Latin, grammar and arithmetic.

Robert Richardson, the biographer of Campbell, sees the formative influence of the Glasgow teachers on him, especially George Jardine in Logic and Rhetoric and John Young in Greek, Grammar and Elocution.<sup>8</sup> The habit of rising at 4 A. M. to study and not retiring before 10 P. M. that started in Glasgow followed throughout his life.<sup>9</sup>

While he was at the University Campbell had the further broadening experience of hearing preachers from various denominations and of enjoying with other students frequent pastoral interviews in their homes.<sup>10</sup> It is likely, while here, that the writings of John Locke on toleration, human

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<sup>7</sup>On the island of Islay, Friday, October 7, 1808. Thomas had been ordered to take a long sea voyage by his doctor to overcome the illness arising from overwork. See W. H. Hanna, Thomas Campbell: Seceder and Christian Union Advocate (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1935), p. 27.

<sup>8</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 131-132.

<sup>9</sup>Selina Huntington Campbell, Home Life, p. 289.

<sup>10</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 187.

understanding and Christianity's reasonableness lodged in his thinking.

Campbell not only shared the education that travel brought to a preacher's family, but continued to learn from the school of experience when he itinerated as a reformer in later life. When he informed the readers of his journals about a recent tour across some section of America or to Europe, he brought out knowledge of the historical significance of the building where he spoke or the port from which he sailed.<sup>11</sup> The subscribers to the Millennial Harbinger received a liberal arts education from a Christian viewpoint and rubbed shoulders through their editor-pastor with some of the great minds of the world. Important to our theme is the fact that when Campbell would pay a visit to such as the House of Lords in London, he would bring back to his followers an evaluation of the speaking style of a Lord Brougham or some other.<sup>12</sup> When he would hear a celebrated Congregational preacher like Dr. Raffles of Liverpool,<sup>13</sup> or a Calvinist in Richmond,<sup>14</sup> or

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<sup>11</sup>For example, see "Notes on a Tour to New York--No. III," M. H., Vol. IV, No. XII (December, 1833), pp. 599-600.

<sup>12</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe--No. VII," M. H., Vol. IV, No. X (October, 1847), p. 545.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., "No. XXXI," Vol. V, No. IX (September, 1848), pp. 518-519.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermons to Young Preachers," C. B., Vol. VII, No. V (December 5, 1829), p. 106.

fellow-disciples such as Walter Scott, D. S. Burnet, Jacob Creath, Isaac Errett, Sidney Rigdon, Peter Ainslie, or a host of others, he could not refrain from reacting like a professor of preaching to the substance, organization and delivery of their themes. If he did not run in his paper the entire sermon,<sup>15</sup> he usually recorded the theme, audience response and his criticism of the message. These evaluations of other's sermons were for the edification of the public messengers among Disciples; but they must also have shaped to some degree his own future efforts to speak more effectively for Christ. While he consciously tried to forget what he had learned in courses and books regarding the art of elocution,<sup>16</sup> his remarks showed that he was never unconscious of a speaker's tone of voice, rising inflection, gesture for emphasis or transition of thought.

We are coming to see that Campbell was molded by his home, by his educational experiences, by his wide travel opportunities and by the thousands of sermons he heard as well as by "the volumes"<sup>17</sup> of sermon-books he had read. He had listened to such greats as John Walker, Alexander

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<sup>15</sup>As in "Address of Elder Isaac Errett," M. H., Vol. VI, No. III (March, 1856), pp. 143 ff.

<sup>16</sup>John A. Williams, Life of Elder John Smith with Some Account of the Rise and Progress of the Current Reformation (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1904) p. 167.

<sup>17</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Textuaries," C. B., Vol. III, No. V (December 5, 1825), p. 106.

Carson, Alexander Haldane, and Rowland Hill.<sup>18</sup> He had read such masters as Robert Hall and Robert Blair.<sup>19</sup> He also had put his hand to writing--not sermons--but essays and articles that affected his way of choosing words, forming sentences and organizing ideas.

D. S. Burnet in A Memorial Discourse on the Occasion of the Death of President Alexander Campbell says:

A scholarly gentleman of another church once said to me "he is certainly orthodox in letters whatever may be said of his theology."<sup>20</sup>

In the university Campbell had written essays on a number of themes. Upon arriving in America he soon set out to contribute articles to the Washington (Pennsylvania) Reporter under the pen name Bonus Homo. When he became a religious editor, he was prolific. What he wrote, though not sermons, became material for the messages delivered Sunday after Sunday<sup>21</sup> by lay leaders in the churches of Christ, being established across the Western Reserve. The

<sup>18</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 60.

<sup>19</sup>Archibald McLean, Alexander Campbell as a Preacher (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1908), p. 17.

<sup>20</sup>(Baltimore: Innes and Maguire, 1866), p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>A Constant Reader, "To the Editor of the Christian Baptist," C. B., Vol. VI, No. VII (February 2, 1829), p. 157.

magazine itself was considered a "monthly missionary," "a printed preacher," a "Herald of truth" to aid in the "teaching and preaching of Christ."<sup>22</sup> Such constant writing, plus editing the writing of others, kept Campbell precise, vivid, and accurate, while he chose to speak extemporaneously rather than to read a manuscript. Others might "in a single discourse break the whole ten commandments of the King's English."<sup>23</sup> Campbell would honor the gospel by clothing it in the fitting attire of fine grammar.

Where many at that time who were affected by the Great Revival could not in their enthusiasm wait for a thorough preparation for the ministry,<sup>24</sup> Campbell underwent a broad education. As the uneducated clergy among such as the Baptists could not hide that omission, Campbell's sermons could not conceal his learning. When he debated he could draw to his side standard, scholarly works. When he conversed with literary or scientific men in the drawing room, he was at home in their terminology. When he delivered a lecture by request upon language, the

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<sup>22</sup>Alexander Campbell, "To the Disciples of Christ Residing in Kansas," M. H., Vol. VII, No. VIII (September, 1857), p. 524.

<sup>23</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Editor's Reply to Brother Garnett," M. H., Vol. VII, No. VI (June, 1836), p. 245.

<sup>24</sup>Albert Henry Newman, A History of the Baptists of the United States (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), p. 380.

state, philosophy, education or other themes,<sup>25</sup> the reporters pronounced him a complete master of his subject and the audiences agreed that they had listened to the thinking of a great mind. When he preached, he seemed to draw without effort from the rich fund of interesting matter stored in his mind. Each sermon confirmed the fact that beyond his formal education of "sixteen years,"<sup>26</sup> he on many days had spent "sixteen hours"<sup>27</sup> in his library.

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<sup>25</sup>In his Popular Lectures and Addresses (Philadelphia: James Challen and Son, 1863), are preserved thirty-seven addresses on as many themes.

<sup>26</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Verse-A-Day System, etc." ibid., p. 313. A portion of this education was in Ahorey. Three years was in his uncles' (Archibald and Enos) academy near Newry.

<sup>27</sup>Archibald McLean, Alexander Campbell as a Preacher, p. 41.



## CHAPTER II

### LIFE AND LABORS

#### A Look at His Ministry

Campbell once said that the Bible, being a book of history, should be studied through the two eyes of chronology and geography.<sup>1</sup> With the same historical consciousness we are ready to survey times and places in his history that are landmarks in his preaching career.

The place of his nativity was Ireland--more specifically, the county was Antrim; the community was Ballymena; the house was the Presbyterian manse. The time of his birth was September 12, 1788. In 1807, while his father sailed for the new world, Alexander at the age of nineteen was gaining public instruction by filling Thomas' shoes as

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Campbell, "One Thousand Preachers Wanted," M. H., Vol. III, No. IV (April, 1850), p. 234.

teacher at Rice Hill (Ireland).

When the Campbell family attempted to follow Thomas to America by setting sail on October 1, 1808, they were shipwrecked six days later in the Hebrides on the isle of Islay. Though at an early date Thomas had planted the idea of becoming a preacher in Alexander's mind, this providential rescue of the family was a major factor in the son's final decision "to spend his entire life in the ministry of the gospel."<sup>2</sup>

This diversion from the proposed direct route to America, placed Campbell in Glasgow by November 3, 1808, allowing him for a year to become a student under the formative influence of the University. A month after arriving in America<sup>3</sup> he was in Washington, (western) Pennsylvania reading the "Declaration and Address" written by his father for the Christian Association of that city.<sup>4</sup> His own growing convictions regarding the sin of church division, were catalyzed by this document of his father and he devoted the rest of his life to the promotion of Christian unity.

Where youthfulness and lack of experience had earlier

<sup>2</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 101-102.

<sup>3</sup>Setting sail, August 3, 1809; arrival, September 29; reading of "Address," October 25.

<sup>4</sup>This group was organized August 17, 1809.

kept him from taking public part in the worship services his father conducted, at the parent's insistence the son, now, aged twenty-two, brought an exhortation at the end of his father's message in the home of Jacob Donaldson. This was so well received that he was asked to preach his first sermon, little suspecting he would preach one hundred and five others before a year had passed. Sermon number one was given before his father's Brush Run congregation on July 15, 1810 in a grove on the farm of Major Templeton, eight miles southwest of Washington. His text for the day was Matthew 7:24-27 and his theme was the comparisons and contrasts of wise and foolish men. The congregation liked it, even better than they had liked the preaching of their beloved pastor Thomas Campbell. The Pittsburgh Presbyterian Synod did not appreciate, however, the fact that an unordained man had been allowed to preach. It was not until New Year's Day in 1812 that Campbell was ordained. He was licensed to preach, nevertheless, on May 4, 1811 at the time when the Christian Association became an independent church to be governed by the New Testament alone. On that occasion Campbell preached on John 6:48, expounding on the Lord's Supper.

1811 was a significant year. Campbell had married Margaret Brown (March 12), had moved in with his father-in-law (March 25), had been licensed (May 4), had initiated weekly communion under a towering oak for some sixty or

seventy who had been formerly of various denominations (June 16),<sup>5</sup> and had seen his father (himself safely out of the water and perched on a tree root) immerse three of the Brush Run congregation on the fourth of July. He also set out that year on his first of a lifetime of preaching tours. This one was into north-eastern Ohio.

After much study regarding the scriptural teaching on ordination, Campbell submitted to the laying on of hands of the local Brush Run Church to become one of their bishops January 1, 1812. Feeling that the same commitment to return to Bible ways forced him to face the question of baptism, he joined his parents and others in immersion at the hands of Elder Mathias Luce at the deep pool in Buffalo Creek. The Brush Run church, now consisting of immersed believers, was received into the Redstone Association of (Regular) Baptist churches.

That Campbell and his congregation were not ever really Baptist became evident as time went on. The cry of heresy ("Antinomianism") went up occasionally before and often after his famous "Sermon on the Law"<sup>6</sup> delivered September 1, 1816 before the Redstone Association convened

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<sup>5</sup>The text of the sermon was Job 8:7 and regarded small beginnings.

<sup>6</sup>This sermon may be found complete in the M. H., Vol. III, No. IX (September, 1846) and in Selina Huntington Campbell, Home Life, etc., pp. 191-236, and in part in Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 469-479.

at Cross Creek, Brooke County, Virginia. During the sermon a lady fainted; Elder Pritchard, recognizing that it was not Baptist doctrine, called out some of the preachers (Estep, Wheeler and others); and the decision was made to bring the message to trial when the Association came together next at Peter's Creek in 1817. Perhaps the reformation Campbell advocated would never have been proclaimed so energetically had it not been for the opposition begun here.<sup>7</sup>

The point of the message was that while the Old Testament law was temporary and local, the New Testament gospel was for all time and universal. Campbell viewed revelation as progressive as he traced it through the Patriarchal, Jewish and Christian dispensations and he termed these "starlight, moonlight and sunlight." John the Baptist was the "twilight" preceding the full blaze of revelation coming in Christ. As Christ was superior to Moses, the gospel was superior to the law. According to the Preface written thirty years after the sermon, present popular Christianity was considered "a compound of Judaism, heathen philosophy and Christianity; which like the materials in Nebuchadnezzar's image, does not cement together."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 493-494.

<sup>8</sup>Campbell saw the gradual unfolding of God's plan for man on God's part, but had not been affected by the philosophy of progress (Hegel, etc.) regarding man himself.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in Selina Campbell, Home Life, p. 192.

While this sermon was called for just two hours before delivery, upon the sudden illness of the scheduled speaker, the idea had been in his thoughts for at least four years as the recently found records of his early sermons confirm.<sup>10</sup>

Wherever Campbell went people were curious to hear his views and were anxious to listen to his able defense of the plea for unity in Christ alone. Before the "Sermon on the Law" a few in Philadelphia, New York and Washington, D. C. heard him in a tour to the East during 1815, soliciting funds for a Wellsburg meeting-house. After that sermon, the spreading word--both pro and con--, added to his attendants. In 1817 he advocated the new plea throughout Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Eastern Ohio. To further assist the reform he opened the Buffalo Seminary in 1818 (Bethany College in 1840), entered the arena of debate with John Walker in 1820 (with McCalla in 1823, Owen in 1829, Purcell in 1837, and Rice in 1843) and began the Christian Baptist in 1823 (the Millennial Harbinger in 1830).

The preaching tours were second to none as influence for the reformation. His thinking was spread throughout the Union, especially the "3,000,000 acres of nine counties which constituted the Western Reserve," into Canada

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<sup>10</sup>Manuscript No. 332 of the material found in Australia contains a sermon on the same text, Romans 8:3, delivered June 6, 1813 at Cadiz and a similar message on Romans 6:14, delivered October 23, 1812 at Brush Run.

and across the sea to Britain, Scotland and Ireland. The time was ripe. America was expanding across the continent; the political and economic systems were promising a whole new way of life; and the population was burgeoning, growing in the United States from nearly thirteen million in 1830 to over twenty-four million in 1850. Freedom and independence were in the air. Men were talking at lyceums, literary societies, college lectureships and learned associations of all kinds; and audiences were ready to listen to any, and especially to such clear and simple, lucid and learned presentations as Campbell could make.<sup>11</sup>

Campbell was a liberal calling for improvement without loss of past values. He advocated an emancipation of slaves, yet free of anarchy, catholicism free of Romanism, protestantism free from sectarianism, Biblical truth free from opinionism, fundamental faith free from creedalism, and reformation free from all fear of failure. Every fly-leaf of every issue of the Harbinger carried the quotation: "Great is the truth and mighty above all things, and will prevail!" Campbell's undergirding assurance was that while skeptics could doubt and guilty men could fear, those who trust God's promises could only know victory.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Robert Richardson, "Excursions--No. II," M. H., Vol. I, No. XI (November, 1837), p. 500, says "We Americans are emphatically a nation of public speakers. Here, almost any occasion...is sufficient to justify a speech. And here anything will do for a rostrum."

The Harbinger contained the planned itinerary prior to a journey<sup>13</sup> to encourage a hearing; and following the fact reports of the results and the messages were given in the periodical. The articles were titled "Notes on a Tour to New York, via Eastern Virginia;" "Sketch of a Tour of Seventy-Five Days;" "Of Sixteen Hundred Miles;" "Notes on a Tour to the North-East" (this included eleven states); "Incidents on a Tour to the South;" "To Eastern Cities;" "To the West;" "To the Far West;" "To the South-West;" "To Canada West;" "Letters from Europe;" "My Imprisonment in Glasgow;" "Our Excursion through Ohio;" "To Iowa;" "To Baltimore and Washington City;" "To Illinois;" "To Nashville;" "To Pittsburgh and Allegheny Cities;" "To Southern Kentucky;" etc. Local papers in the various communities<sup>14</sup> and religious journals<sup>15</sup> of the various denominations likewise announced his coming and reacted to his sermons.

The addresses disseminated his principles of reform;

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<sup>12</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The Triumphs of Christianity," C. B., Vol. V, No. IX (April 7, 1828), p. 267.

<sup>13</sup>See Alexander Campbell, "The Geography and Chronology of My Contemplated Tour to Missouri," M. H., Vol. II, No. XI (November, 1852), p. 640.

<sup>14</sup>Cincinnati Daily Dispatch,  
Washington National Era,  
New York Observer,  
Lexington Monitor, etc.

<sup>15</sup>Nashville Christian Advocate, Baptist Chronicle,  
Religious Herald, etc.



and often increased the contributions to his college. The debates did more to secure followers than a year of preaching. The lectures on topics not strictly religious<sup>16</sup> broadened numerically his audiences and increased his reputation significantly. The convention addresses to his own followers deepened their admiration and stirred their ardor. The baccalaureate addresses each fourth of July at Bethany College by its president were as expected and desired as were his morning lectures each school-day throughout the years.

Articles on Campbell often speak of his robust health and his freedom from illness until the very final days of his life. The tour records, however, show Campbell to have been troubled by a common preacher problem--fatigue and hoarseness. Damp and cold weather, or overuse of the voice in public and private gatherings, obliged him to miss some appointments<sup>17</sup> or to call for medical

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<sup>16</sup>Such as "Is Moral Philosophy an Inductive Science?" given June 16, 1840 before the Jeffersonian Society of the University of Virginia; "Demonology" delivered March 10, 1841 before the Popular Lecture Club of Nashville, Tennessee; "Primary or Common Schools" delivered September 8, 1841 in Clarksburg, Virginia; "Responsibility of Men of Genius" delivered August 6, 1844 before the Union Literary Society of Miami University, Ohio; "The Anglo-Saxon Language--Its Origin, Character and Destiny" delivered December 11, 1849 before the Young Men's Mercantile Library Association; "The Destiny of Our Country" delivered August 3, 1852 before the Philo-Literary Society of Jefferson College; "Phrenology, Animal Magnetism, Spirit Rappings, etc." delivered September 28, 1852 before the Washington Literary Society of Washington College; "The True Basis of all Moral Science" delivered April 13, 1856 before the Athenium.

assistance.<sup>18</sup> He had his own quaint way of tackling the problem, as revealed in this incident:

I had contracted so severe a cold in journeying in the bleak, moist winds of that week, that on my arrival in Independence, my voice was completely taken away, so as not to be able to articulate or clearly enunciate a single sentence.... By the philosophy of a sound sleep, after a two hour's bath in a wet sheet, my voice was restored so that I was enabled, next day, to deliver a discourse.<sup>19</sup>

The aging Alexander Campbell who attended his last general convention in 1864 and submitted his last article for the Millennial Harbinger in 1865, preached his last sermon in 1866. The topic was "the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" from Ephesians, chapter one. The presentation was as vigorous as in the early days; however, when he (now seventy-eight years of age and weak from several weeks of confinement) set out to speak his son-in-law, W. K. Pendleton, noting his weakness, encouraged him to give way to Robert Richardson. On the Lord's Day, which

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<sup>17</sup>For example, see Alexander Campbell, "Tour of Forty Days in the States of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana--No. I," M. H., Vol. I, No. I (January, 1851), p. 18.

<sup>18</sup>For example, see Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to the South--No. I," M. H., Vol. VII, No. VI (June, 1857), p. 312; or ibid., "No. III" M. H., Vol. II, No. VIII (August, 1845), pp. 342-345.

<sup>19</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes of Incidents on a Tour Through Illinois and Missouri--No. III," M. H., Vol. III, No. III (March, 1853), pp. 127-128.

was March 4, 1866, at fifteen minutes before it turned into Monday, Alexander Campbell expired. Richardson records that occasionally during his final years, Campbell's wife would be awakened by his preaching during sleep. The theme one night very shortly before his passing was Christ's second coming.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Selina Huntington Campbell, Home Life, p. 253.

## CHAPTER III

### SOURCES AND STRUCTURE

#### A Look at His Sermons

Upon what texts and themes did Alexander Campbell major in his preaching? How did he organize his sermons and in what way introduce and conclude them? If he used illustrations, what was his source of supply? These questions and others regarding characteristics and preparation patterns are the interrogations of this chapter.

When we examine Campbell's hymn-book,<sup>1</sup> prepared for the worshipping church, it is possible to say that Christ and Christ alone was his theme. That hymnal had three sections--Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs. The "Psalms"

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<sup>1</sup>Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Adapted to the Christian Religion, Selected by Alexander Campbell, 2d ed., (Bethany, Brooke County, Virginia: Printed and Published by A. Campbell, 1829).

were songs on the life of Christ arranged in chronological order. The "Hymns," each following the example of the Book of Revelation, was addressed in praise to Christ as the Lamb upon the throne. The "Spiritual Songs," while upon other Biblical themes, were placed in the hymnal to enable the Christians to "teach one another"<sup>2</sup> all that Christ "had commanded."<sup>3</sup>

Looking into Campbell's sermon notes, as we have gazed upon his hymnal, it is equally valid to speak of Christ as Campbell's all-absorbing theme. He clearly was a preacher of the Bible,<sup>4</sup> especially of the New Testament, and most especially of Christ. In sampling the texts referred to either in Campbell's original sermon notes, or in records concerning where and what he preached; we find that of one hundred forty-six messages tested, only sixteen had Old Testament passages as their basic texts (however, even here according to his custom he drew illustrations for his theme from the entire range of Biblical history). When

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<sup>2</sup>Col. 3:16.

<sup>3</sup>Mt. 28:19. Campbell believed that we "are as dependent on his (God's) Word for light, as we are upon his blood for pardon." Campbell, The Christian System: In Reference to the Union of Christians, and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity, as Plead in the Current Reformation (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1835), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>The Bible contained "...sublimier themes than nature knows," in "The Christian Preacher--No.I," M. H., Vol. III No. I (January, 1832), p. 27.

he did choose a passage of Old Testament Scripture, it was a New Testament truth that he illumined: such as the Lord's Supper from the Song of Solomon,<sup>5</sup> the progressive light of revelation from Genesis 1:3<sup>6</sup> or the New Testament Church from the typology of the Old Testament Tabernacle.<sup>7</sup> The entire Bible from Moses the lawgiver to John the revelator had Christ as its single theme.

Upon taking a text from the gospels, epistles or apocalypse, the announced subject might be prayer, covenants or edification; but the actual theme was Christ the intercessor in prayer, Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, or the living Word the all-sufficient theme of the church.

Christ's person, Christ's work, Christ's character, Christ's perfection, Christ's supremacy, Christ's glory, Christ's revelation, Christ's salvation, Christ's life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and glorification were the topics of Scripture and the message of Campbell.

<sup>5</sup>Campbell preached a communion sermon from Song of Solomon 2:8-13 on May 5, 1811 at Brush Run, calling the language of the text "human and natural" but the ideas "spiritual and supernatural" (Manuscript D).

<sup>6</sup>"An Address," M. H., Vol. II, No. IV (April, 1852), pp. 181 ff. This was also his topic when such a text as Malachi 3 was used in 1826 at the meeting of the Mahoning Baptist Association. See Alexander Campbell, "Anecdotes, Incidents, and Facts," M. H., Vol. VI, No. I (January, 1849), p. 46.

<sup>7</sup>Campbell preached December 2, 1812 from Exodus 19-20 and Hebrews 9:9 on the typology of the court, walls and holy place of the Tabernacle (Manuscript No. 332) and at another time Exodus 25:27-28 on the furniture (Manuscript No. 332).

Having the single theme of Christ for preaching and teaching did not lead to monotony. The list of Campbell's first year of preaching shows sixty-one varied topics in the one hundred and six messages.<sup>8</sup> A series of lectures in Nottingham thirty-seven years later indicates similar unity in variety. The five subjects were: "Has God ever spoken to man? The Kingdom of Heaven. The Holy Spirit. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Principles of Christian Union."<sup>9</sup> Enough scattered material on these subjects is found in Campbellian sources to show that Christ was the basic subject of each message no matter how varied were the announced topics.

If the reoccurrence of certain themes and texts in the notes of a preaching tour, does not imply the reuse of the very same sermon, it at least suggests that some subjects and Biblical passages had become favorites of Campbell. Mrs. Campbell said that while her husband often spoke on the same topics, such themes were sufficiently "varied and enlarged" to be always fresh and absorbing.<sup>10</sup> A contributor to the Millennial Harbinger, signing only the initials

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<sup>8</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Leaves from a Life," quoted from C. B., in the Christian Standard (October 15, 1898), p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>Nicholas Jackson, "Notices," in Bible Advocate (England) quoted in "European Tour," M. H., Vol. IV, No. IX (September, 1847), p. 515.

<sup>10</sup>Selina Campbell, Home Life, ibid., p. 356.

"J. W." agreed:

We had the privilege of hearing brother Campbell on the same topic when in Banbury and Newcastle....Not, indeed, that it could be the same discourse. No: this would be impossible; for no two, even on the same topic are alike. The different points investigated--the illustrations so varied, etc.<sup>11</sup>

Among the early records Campbell made of his preaching engagements is one chart divided into sixty-six sections for the sixty-six books of his canon of Scripture.<sup>12</sup> Under each Biblical book he had listed all the sermons he had preached to that date from some passage in that particular section of Scripture. This appears to indicate an early desire on his part not to neglect any portion of the inspired writings in his pulpit ministry. Campbell decided later on that the better way to give a congregation the thorough view of Scripture was not to select a text from each book over a long period of time, but to give scope and dimension to every sermon by setting each passage in its broadest context and by drawing illustrations from the vast expanse of Biblical history.

From I Timothy 3:16 Campbell preached "On the Justification and Coronation of the Messiah." This sermon was

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<sup>11</sup>"Letters from Europe," M. H., Vol. V, No. X (October, 1848), p. 573.

<sup>12</sup>Microfilm prepared in Australia, on file at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society labeled "News Clippings, etc."



written in full for publication in Kentucky during 1850 and was included with messages by twenty-seven religious leaders from various denominational bodies. It is copied in his wife's work on his Home Life.<sup>13</sup> Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16 were often the passages used on a missionary occasion. Hebrews 1 offered thoughts on God's last message by his son and Hebrews 11 on the faith that saves. The good confession in Matthew 16:16-18 was many times proclaimed as the only foundation of Christian union, communion and co-operation that is "broad enough, or strong enough to sustain Christ's own church of all nations and of all ages."<sup>14</sup> Another unity text was John 17 or Ephesians 4:4-6. Each case of conversion in Luke's record, the Book of Acts, was foundation for a message with apostolic authority on how men are saved. Man's salvation and the church's unity were Campbell's major concerns. He held no doubt that his co-laborers "had got hold of the great principles of ecclesiastical union and communion on which all real Christians of all denominations, might, could and certainly would one day unite."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Selina Campbell, op. cit., pp. 136-164.

<sup>14</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to Eastern Virginia--No. II," M. H., Vol. VI, No. III (March, 1856), p. 137.

<sup>15</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Humble Beginnings," M. H., Vol. VI, No. I (January, 1842), p. 5.

In order to give a local congregation the whole counsel of God, he covered the moral and religious field with a lesson on marriage, another on fasting, still others on predestination, judgment, apostasy, conscience, justification, mediation, spiritual gifts, et al. All of these subjects and more were discussed in the light of the apostle's doctrine.

When the preacher Campbell announced his topic and text, the congregation at that point still did not know how he would develop it. Let us look at some examples to sense how his mind organized ideas and how it led the auditors from where they were to where he wanted them to be.

In Lexington,<sup>16</sup> Campbell, taking Christ's interview with Nicodemus for a text, compared the three kingdoms of nature, grace and glory. He showed each (1) to be created by a word of God; (2) designed to produce natural, gracious and glorious beings, (3) proposed to live natural, spiritual and eternal lives, (4) introduced by natural, gracious and glorious births; (5) from the flesh, from water and the Spirit, and from the grave; (6) enjoying a salvation from natural danger, from the guilt, pollution and power of sin over the soul, and of the body from the grave. The conclusion stressed the impossibility of being in any of the three kingdoms without a birth into it. According to all

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<sup>16</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, pp. 336-337.

available reports, Campbell's sermon on I Corinthians 13 was especially impressive dealing with Christian faith, hope and love as it showed the first to be founded on the witnessed facts concerning Christ, the second on the promises given by Christ, and "the greatest" of all on the beautiful holiness and character of Christ.

Since Revelation 14:6-7 was quoted on every flyleaf of a Millennial Harbinger; we want to notice that when he topically dealt with the "everlasting gospel" of this passage, Campbell reasoned that the term "everlasting" was fitting as applied to the "gospel" because of its eternal author, abiding covenant, lasting foundation and continuing effects (i.e., everlasting righteousness, salvation, consolation, victory and glory).<sup>17</sup>

Sometimes the major points of an outline were put in the form of questions that people ask: "What am I? Whence came I? Whither do I go?"<sup>18</sup>; or, What is the whole world? Does its gain necessarily imply the loss of the soul? Is not that life great that could gain all the world? What is presupposed in the "so" loving the world that the soul is lost.<sup>19</sup> His "Sermon on the Law" was an effort to answer

<sup>17</sup>Manuscript D

<sup>18</sup>Alexander Campbell, "An Address on Education," M. H., Vol. VI, No. XI (November, 1856), p. 635.

<sup>19</sup>Sermon on Matthew 16:26 in Manuscript E.

the questions: what "the law" means, what it could not accomplish, why it failed and how God remedied its defects.<sup>20</sup> A popular lecture often given to college students or skeptical audiences raised and answered four questions: Has God ever spoken to man? In what language has he spoken? If in human language, how is it to be interpreted? and What has he said to us in his last message by his Son?<sup>21</sup> An early communion sermon asked what we were to do, how, why, how often and with what consequences and advantages.<sup>22</sup>

At other times, in the place of proposed questions, the outline was one of chronological consciousness: "Christianity as it was, as it is, and as it ought to be;"<sup>23</sup> or Christ's kingdom in origin, progress and ultimate triumph;<sup>24</sup> or, again, the great leaders of men: Moses, John and Jesus (their attestations, their promises and threatenings, and the place of passing through water on the part of their disciples--the immersion into Moses in cloud and sea, into reformation at the Jordan, and into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in Christian baptism).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 472.

<sup>21</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour--No. III," M. H., Vol. II, No. I (January, 1831), p. 28.

<sup>22</sup>Manuscript No. 332.

<sup>23</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to Illinois--No. III," M. H., Vol. IV, No. I (January, 1854), p. 44.

<sup>24</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 635.

<sup>25</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Incidents on a Tour to Nashville, Tennessee--No. VI," M. H., Vol. II, No. III (March, 1831), p. 116.

The major points of the outline many times were numerous, such as when he spoke of the kingdom of Christ in its constitution, government, subjects, laws, privileges and marks;<sup>26</sup> or when he taught concerning the judgment under Christ relating to its preparation, judge, person's judged, manner and the trial's subject.<sup>27</sup>

In those instances that the basic organization was simple, the subpoints were often extensive. For example, when he spoke on ordination among Jews, Christians and that relating to the pastoral office; he used nine examples in the first division, five in the second and four in the third.<sup>28</sup> In a two-point message on hidden and revealed things, to the first item he asks what the hidden things are, from whom they are hidden and in what manner they are hidden. On the second topic he again asks to whom, in what manner and why some items are revealed.<sup>29</sup>

When he spoke on the doctrine of baptism "by special request," he expounded its action, its legitimate subject and its design, taking time during the last division to refute the allegation that Campbellites gave the virtue of

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<sup>26</sup>Sermon on John 18:36 in Manuscript D.

<sup>27</sup>Sermon on Revelation 20:11-13 in Manuscript E.

<sup>28</sup>Sermon on Titus 1:5 in Manuscript F.

<sup>29</sup>Sermon on Matthew 11:25-27 in Manuscript F.

Christ's blood to baptismal water. This he denied, reasoning that his opponents "might as truthfully charge upon us the doctrine of Roman Transubstantiation, because we quote the words 'this is my body,' 'this is my blood,' in dispensing the monumental loaf and cup."<sup>30</sup> On a trip to Tennessee Campbell preached on the "Seven Baptisms" that exist when you go beyond the "one baptism" extant when Paul addressed the Ephesians. He dealt with infant baptism, Quaker baptism, John's baptism, fire baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, metaphorical baptism and "the one immersion, or Christian baptism."<sup>31</sup>

Viewing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper from the vantage point of I Corinthians 11:23-29, he looked at its commemorative intention, its symbolic nature, its practical use and its necessary qualifications on the part of a worshipper.<sup>32</sup> At another time on the same passage he illustrated how the gospel is preached in words, in ordinances and in the lives of its professors.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to the South--No. II," M. H., Vol. VII, No. VIII (September, 1857), p.506.

<sup>31</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Incidents on a Tour to Nashville--No. V," M. H., Vol. II, No. II (February, 1831), pp. 54-60.

<sup>32</sup>Manuscript F.

<sup>33</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Notes on a Tour to New York--No. V," M. H., Vol. V, No. I (January, 1834), p. 37.

Religion, my Christian brethren, as the term indicates, began after the Fall. Holy men and angels did not need faith, repentance, prayer, altars, priests, victims, rites, or religious usages, to bring them back, or bind them fast to God. The word religion, indeed, imparts a previous apostasy.<sup>34</sup>

So began a sermon on prayer that stressed four indispensables to successful prayer: a mediator, faith, repentance and the teachings of the Holy Spirit.

We preach the gospel when we say "be damned" as well as when we say "be saved."<sup>35</sup>

was the opening sentence of a message from Mark 16:16 regarding the faith that saves. At another time the same apostolic commission to preach to every creature was read, with this statement its immediate follow-up:

Wide as humanity and enduring as time,  
or till every son of Adam hears the  
message of salvation, extends this com-  
mission in its letter, spirit, and  
obligation.<sup>36</sup>

To initiate the teaching on progressive revelation, Campbell simply read a line from Genesis 1:3 and immediately added

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<sup>34</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Short Sermons on Christian Practice," M. H., Vol. III, No. V (May, 1839), p. 204.

<sup>35</sup>Manuscript D.

<sup>36</sup>Alexander Campbell, "An Address," M. H., Vol. III, No. XI (November, 1853), p. 606.

one pithy, thought-challenging sentence:

"God said, Let there be light, and light was." This was the first speech ever made within our universe.<sup>37</sup>

To capture attention, as he launched into the sermon preparing for the first celebration of the Lord's Supper at Brush Run, Campbell having read the Scripture John 6:48, 58 said:

Sin, death, and misery entered the world by eating. So may righteousness, life and joy come to us.<sup>38</sup>

A study of Campbell's sermon introductions seems to indicate that they were intended to gain the attention of the audience and then to interest it in the subject he intended to treat. Judge Jeremiah Sullivan Black<sup>39</sup> said that "the first sentence of his discourse 'drew the audience still as death.'" <sup>40</sup> This was likely the case in Scotland when the Paisley Baptist congregation, in expectancy to hear a man for the first time whose reputation was that of

<sup>37</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 594.

<sup>38</sup>Manuscript F.

<sup>39</sup>Chief Justice of Pennsylvania and later Attorney General of the United States.

<sup>40</sup>Quoted in Archibald McLean, Alexander Campbell as a Preacher, reprint of 1908 ed. by Fleming H. Revell Company, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1955), p. 11.



an undramatic speaker that opposed text-preaching, saw Campbell enter the pulpit, look around for a moment, lift the open Bible in his hands, and begin:

We are not in the habit of taking a verse out of a chapter, or a clause out of a verse, for a text to preach from. We take the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, for a text, and preach from it.

Setting the Bible down on the pulpit, he continued:

On this occasion, we shall depart from our usual practice, and take the thirteenth chapter of first<sup>41</sup> Corinthians and thirteenth verse.

The introductions were not long for a sermon that might last two to six times as long as those preached by his successors. The conclusions were also comparatively brief, but also intensely practical. If non-Christians were addressed, and they were deemed ready for harvesting the "necessity of immediate submission"<sup>42</sup> to Christ was enforced and the hearers left in no doubt regarding the definite things God was asking them to do. They were not to tarry, or pray, but to obey the gospel commands of

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<sup>41</sup>Mrs. Eliza Davies, The Story of an Earnest Life: A Woman's Adventure in Australia, and in Two Voyages Around the World (Cincinnati: Central Book Concern, 1881), pp. 239-240.

<sup>42</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Model of a Discourse, No. II," M. H., Vol. III, No. VIII (August, 1832), p. 400.

repentance and baptism. They could declare their faith by standing where they were and openly avowing Christ.<sup>43</sup> The body of the sermon was an appeal to the understanding to produce faith; the conclusion permitted an appeal to the heart or feelings<sup>44</sup> to act on what they now believed.

When the hearers were Christians gathered for edification, they were to see the practical application of all that was said and to be exhorted by specific appeals to live the life of a Christian. To conclude an address to a mixed audience (i.e., "mongrel races of modern times, part Jews, and part Christians") was more difficult than any effort by the apostles.

To convert such a people from error to truth--from theory to practice--from disobedience to obedience--from Satan to Christ--this is the work that requires the wisdom of a Paul and the eloquence of an Apollos.<sup>45</sup>

The illustration books on which Campbell relied for analogies were three--the Bible, the book of nature, and history. If the audience followed agricultural pursuits,

<sup>43</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters from Europe--No. VI," M. H., Vol. IV, No. IX (September, 1847), p. 527.

<sup>44</sup>Alexander Campbell, Debate on the Evidences of Christianity: (Campbell-Owen Debate) (Bethany, Va.: Alexander Campbell, 1829), p. 463.

<sup>45</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Letters to England--No VIII," M. H., Vol. II, No. IV (April, 1838), p. 181.

several illustrations might be used well-suited to their understanding.<sup>46</sup> If they were Bible students, appeal could be made to the events of both Testaments. If they knew history, its happenings were illustrative of Biblical principles. Christ and his apostles had drawn from these same sources in illustrating their teachings. Campbell's broad education, extensive travels, wide experiences and keen memory provided readily proverbs, poetry, maxims, quotations, facts.

He used chaste, homely, vivid and apt analogies, and never told a string of anecdotes to appeal to the ears itching for fine illustrations. He would never string out a series of death-bed stories. Any story was to bring clarity to the truth enunciated and neither to embellish nor call attention to itself. For this reason "those who looked for pepper and salt and vinegar were surprised to receive manna, wine and oil."<sup>47</sup>

As Campbell stated his proposition, proved and illustrated it, he would regularly summarize and restate to keep the listeners clear as to his main point. All the subpoints and illustrations contributed directly to the

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<sup>46</sup>H. Hussey, "A Visit to Elder Campbell at Bethany," M. H., Vol. IV, No. XI (November, 1854), p. 648.

<sup>47</sup>Archibald McLean, Thomas and Alexander Campbell (Cincinnati: Foreign Christian Missionary Society, 1930), p. 51.

conclusion he had in mind. Often the audience was informed from the beginning exactly where the sermon would lead. At other times he would move from one seemingly unconnected point to another, until at length perception would come almost at once regarding their necessary relationship. Richardson observed, it is

as some Napoleon directs at various distant points large and isolated bodies of troops, whose destination cannot be determined by ordinary minds until the unexpected concentration of the whole upon a given point reveals the comprehensive genius of the warrior.<sup>48</sup>

Like a warrior, Campbell set upon preaching the sermon with a definite plan based upon his analysis of the audience and the theme. Did not his preaching examples, the inspired apostles, contemplate the men before them "as believers or as unbelievers--as practicing or not practising the precepts of the Savior" and then immediately propose some point "in reference to which they opened the scriptures and applied them?"<sup>49</sup> Had not Campbell himself advised young preachers to "first of all ascertain the stature of the mind, or the amount of information which his audience may be supposed to possess"<sup>50</sup> as the

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<sup>48</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 585.

<sup>49</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Practical Thoughts and Reflections," M. H., Vol. V, No. III (March, 1848), p. 140.

<sup>50</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Sermons to Young Preachers--No. IV," C. B., Vol. VII, No. IX (April 5, 1830), p. 213.

foundation upon which they would build?

To make an audience wiser in the ways of the Lord, required disciplined study on the part of the teacher or preacher. A spokesman's ambition ought to be becoming "mighty in the Scriptures" rather than "accomplished scholars or mighty in human learning."<sup>51</sup> To be able to teach others the Bible in its proper contextual connection or the Scriptural testimony on a given topic (and in either case speaker and hearer grapple directly with the Bible itself), preachers must know clearly what they are going to show others. Since Campbell saw that it required hours of study, in many instances, "to read one verse or chapter in the Bible, so as to produce the proper effect,"<sup>52</sup> he spent many hours daily in his library. There among carefully selected books, he spent most of his time with the one book that contained the message he was to teach. In replying to Robert B. Semple in 1830, Campbell lists the many books he had devoured on a given theme and the many texts he had marshalled in support of the doctrine, but then laments:

I am conscious that I did not understand  
the New Testament--not a single book of

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<sup>51</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Publications," M. H., Vol. I, No. V (May, 1837), p. 237.

<sup>52</sup>Alexander Campbell, Popular Lectures and Addresses (Philadelphia: James Challen & Son, 1864), p. 68.

it. Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott were my favorite Commentators. I read the whole of Thomas Scott's Commentary in family worship, section by section. I began to read the scriptures critically. Works of criticism, from Michaelis down to Shark, on the Greek article, were resorted to. While these threw light on many passages, still the book as a whole, the religion of Jesus Christ as a whole was hid from me. I took the naked text and followed common sense; it became to me a new book.<sup>53</sup>

Long before breakfast, according to his wife,<sup>54</sup> or reclining in a chair awaiting some meal, according to his biographer,<sup>55</sup> Campbell was reading his Bible according to common sense rules of interpretation<sup>56</sup>--the usual principles applied to any other writing. That he successfully taught the scriptures in their context was the conclusion of men like ex-president Madison who considered Campbell "the ablest and most original expounder of the Scripture"<sup>57</sup> he had ever heard.

Scope and dimension are words that define a Campbellian sermon in contrast to what he considered scrap preaching. To pick a phrase from the Bible to meet the

<sup>53</sup>M. H., Vol. I, No. III (March, 1830), p. 138.

<sup>54</sup>Selina Campbell, Home Life, p. 289.

<sup>55</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 442.

<sup>56</sup>See Chapter II "The Bible" in Alexander Campbell, The Christian System, pp. 3-5.

<sup>57</sup>Quoted in Archibald McLean, Alexander Campbell as a Preacher, p. 11.

needs of the varied audience was "like buying a lottery ticket...in the hope of really interesting, and substantially and eternally benefitting, half a dozen of persons." His verdict regarding that type of preaching was that there "are a thousand blanks to one prize!"<sup>58</sup> Each of Campbell's sermons had a wholeness, and while having a text, that passage was placed like a jewel in the setting of the plan of God for man.

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<sup>58</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Elder J. B. Ferguson's Relation of Pastor and People, No. I," M. H., Vol. IV, No. X (October, 1854), p. 564.

## CHAPTER IV

### IMPACT AND IMPRESSION

#### A Look at His Influence

Alexander Campbell, who would consider himself but one of the bishops of the Brush Run congregation, was thought of by others as approximating either a messiah or an anti-Christ. The exalted words of praise by his friends regarding his preaching almost cause the reader to blush. The derogatory remarks of his enemies go to the other extreme. Had a Gallup Poll been conducted to determine the favorable or unfavorable impact and impression of Campbell's pulpit achievements, it appears that the results would indicate a landslide in his favor.

A Flemingsburgh, Kentucky clergyman charged Campbell with being a pleaser of men, i.e. "the Arian, infidel, horse-racer, and gambler." Yet, he added, "I never heard



Campbell preach--I never wish to hear him; but I am convinced he is no gospel preacher."<sup>1</sup> A religious journal, Watchman of the Prairies, editorialized concerning him:

More distinguished for his oratory, wit, and talent, than for his piety, he very soon acquired considerable celebrity, as a public speaker....Few persons have ever possessed more of the qualities of a religious demagogue than Alexander Campbell. Eloquent in speech, adroit in argument, witty, ambitious, unscrupulous, and fond of public notoriety, he succeeded, under the most favorable circumstance, in acquiring a popularity which has given him considerable influence over the minds of many.<sup>2</sup>

From the Columbian Star editor, who wrote, "I never saw Mr. Campbell, but I have been informed,"<sup>3</sup> to the editor of the Connecticut Journal, who listed as Campbell's beliefs, what Campbell denied were his beliefs, an expected opposition was manifest by church leaders who disliked his challenge of the status quo.

Those who considered themselves delivered from creedal bondage or allegorical interpretations were not hesitant with their expression of admiration. Jeremiah Vardeman declared that, "if all the Baptist preachers in Kentucky were put into one, they would not make an Alexander

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Alexander Campbell in "Little Things," C. B., Vol. II, No. VII (February 7, 1825), p. 144.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in M. H., Vol. I, No. II (February, 1851), pp. 82-83.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in C. B., Vol. VII, No. IX (April 5, 1830), p. 233.

Campbell!!! (sic)"<sup>4</sup> John R. Howard wrote from Illinois to the Christian Standard saying,

...we regard him as decidedly the greatest man, take him every way, the world has produced since the days of the Apostles.<sup>5</sup>

An array of compliments to Campbell's preaching from famous contemporaries can be read by those interested. These may be found in Archibald McLean's small volume Alexander Campbell as a Preacher or the chapter "Prince of Preachers" by J. W. Grafton in his book Alexander Campbell Leader of the Great Reformation of the Nineteenth Century.<sup>6</sup> These authors did not omit the "encomiums" on Campbell as did the correspondent of an English periodical, the Bible Advocate, who felt that what he heard "however merited, did sound too exuberant for publication."<sup>7</sup>

What most impressed one Disciple was Campbell's grand conceptions, striking illustrations and comprehensive scope.<sup>8</sup> Another was awed by the "freshness of his

<sup>4</sup>John Augustus Williams, Life of Elder John Smith with some account of the Rise and Progress of the current Reformation (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1904), p. 121.

<sup>5</sup>"Correspondence," Christian Standard (August 15, 1868).

<sup>6</sup>(St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1897).

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in "European Tour," M. H., Vol. IV, No. IX (September, 1847), p. 515.

<sup>8</sup>Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 164.

thought."<sup>9</sup> Still another spoke of "clarity,"<sup>10</sup> "simplicity"<sup>11</sup> or new insights.<sup>12</sup> Most were struck by the conviction of Aylet Bains that Campbell had "more Bible knowledge than any man living."<sup>13</sup> This had been Racoon John Smith's reaction from the first message he had heard, claiming "(Campbell) has thrown more light on the Epistle and on the whole Scriptures, than I have received in all the sermons that I have ever heard before."<sup>14</sup>

We might expect a more objective report on Campbell's impact if we turn from strongly emotioned supporters or foes to the intellectual leaders at a university, the respected editors of major denominational journals and the community's professional men. President Robert Graham of Kentucky University conceived of Campbell as having few equals and no superiors in the pulpit.<sup>15</sup> President Heman

<sup>9</sup>Benjamin Lyon Smith, Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1930), p. 262.

<sup>10</sup>Amos Sutton Hayden, Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve, Ohio (Cincinnati: Chase and Hall, 1875), p. 391.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel Rogers quoted in Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 333.

<sup>12</sup>Eliza Davies, The Story of an Earnest Life: A Woman's Adventures in Australia, and in Two Voyages Around the World (Cincinnati: Central Book Concern, 1881), p. 240.

<sup>13</sup>Entry for October 28, 1858 in Unpublished diary among the MSS at the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky.

<sup>14</sup>Williams, ibid., p. 132.

<sup>15</sup>Archibald McLean, Alexander Campbell as a Preacher (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), p. 12.

Humphrey of Amherst College looked upon him as the most perfectly self-possessed, the most perfectly at ease in the pulpit of any preacher he had listened to.<sup>16</sup> Yale's professor of Theology, Dr. Leonard Bacon, believed him to have "but few, if any, equals among the religious leaders of his time."<sup>17</sup> Where Campbell went to speak to University audiences, if they were not at first struck by his voice, appearance or delivery; the students, like Joseph Brady at Miami University pronounced the speech "the best" they had heard.<sup>18</sup>

An impressive host of names can be displayed, as McLean has done, of Editors<sup>19</sup> and historians,<sup>20</sup> doctors<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Quoted from the New York Observer by William Baxter, "Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott as Preachers," The British Harbinger (September 1, 1869), p. 290.

<sup>17</sup>Quoted in Autobiography of Benjamin Johnson Radford (Eureka, Illinois: n.p., 1928), p. 14.

<sup>18</sup>Entry of August 6, 1844 in an unpublished "Journal kept at Miami University 1843-1848" quoted by Albert A. Gonse, Jr., "A Rhetorical Analysis and Criticism of Selected Occasional Addresses of Alexander Campbell 1838-1858, Unpublished M. A. thesis (University of Alabama, 1950), p. 58. Cp. W. C. Rogers, Recollections of Men of Faith (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1889), pp. 13-16.

<sup>19</sup>Such as George D. Prentice of the Louisville Journal.

<sup>20</sup>Such as Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of Americans (New York: Dodd, Meade and Company, 1832) I, p. 149 ff.

<sup>21</sup>Such as Theodore S. Ball of Louisville.

and lawyers,<sup>22</sup> and military<sup>23</sup> and national leaders<sup>24</sup> that speak tribute to Campbell as a speaker and preacher. Baptist,<sup>25</sup> Episcopal,<sup>26</sup> Methodist,<sup>27</sup> Presbyterian,<sup>28</sup> Catholic<sup>29</sup> and even sceptical<sup>30</sup> supporters of his eminence in the pulpit can be found with little difficulty. When we read the glowing descriptions of Campbell's method of delivery or subject matter, are we reading the eulogy of a now-dead style of preaching or the words of spectators who have gazed in admiration upon a fresh way of sermon-delivery newly born?

Advocates of Christian unity by a return to Apostolic

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<sup>22</sup>Such as Chief Justice Jeremiah Sullivan Black of Pennsylvania (later Attorney-General of the United States).

<sup>23</sup>Such as General Robert E. Lee.

<sup>24</sup>Such as President Madison and President Buchanan.

<sup>25</sup>Such as Thomas Armitage, A History of the Baptists (New York: Bryan, Baylor, and Company, 1887), p. 736.

<sup>26</sup>Such as the Protestant Churchman quoted in Richardson, Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 513.

<sup>27</sup>Such as the National Christian Advocate quoted in M. H., Vol. V, No. I (January, 1855), pp. 42-45 or Bishop Warren A. Changler, The South in the Building of the Nation, Vol. X, p. 525.

<sup>28</sup>Such as the Protestant Herald, quoted in M. H., Vol. I, No. IV (April, 1844), pp. 181-182.

<sup>29</sup>Such as Archbishop Purcell quoted in John Allen Hudson, The Man and the Moment (Cincinnati: Christian Leader Corporation, 1927), p. 117.

<sup>30</sup>Such as the Society of Moral Philanthropists quoted in M. H., Vol. V, No. II (February, 1834), p. 80.

faith and practice not only began to say what Alexander Campbell was saying but attempted to pattern after their ideal in his way of speaking. There grew up in Ohio the "School of the Preachers"<sup>31</sup> to mold more adequately the Disciples who labored in teaching. At the annual meeting of the churches in that section the preachers suggested having stated meeting times to improve their skills in the manner of public instruction as well as the matter they presented. Campbell believed the practice of self-criticism would have better fruit than the certain congregational criticism that otherwise would be whispered to the proclaimer's certain disadvantage. At that time there was no other training offered to the spokesmen of the church. By having quarterly gatherings<sup>32</sup> of located and itinerant preachers for mutual correction the gap hopefully could be bridged. For a week of time at specified place each participant could bring an hour sermon on an assigned theme. This was to be critically examined by his fellow-preachers. The public was welcomed to hear the three or four sermons

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<sup>31</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The School of Preachers," M. H., Vol. VI, No. X (October, 1835), pp. 478-479. See also M. H., Vol. VII, No. I (January, 1836), pp. 45-46 and Vol. III, No. X (October, 1839), pp. 466-467.

<sup>32</sup>Later these became annual for practical reasons. See Alexander Campbell "Anecdotes, Incidents, and Facts," M. H., Vol. V, No. IX (September, 1848), p. 524.

presented each day but not the thorough review of the messages which included even word pronunciation.<sup>33</sup> The youngest were first asked for comments and finally the oldest. Campbell, who often tried to be present, reported the spirit of the brethren to have been the best and the criticism to have been severe, impartial and beneficial. The first gathering of this kind was the Ohio Western Reserve School at New Lisbon, Saturday to Thursday, December 5 through 10, 1835, when all the speakers dealt with the theme of "principles and rules of interpretation."

The value of these gatherings was immeasurable; since a defect, that otherwise might have become an imbedded habit, could by the aid of faithful monitors be healed for the benefit of both preacher and hearer.<sup>34</sup> However, since not only sermonic matter, form and delivery were discussed but doctrinal questions were raised and debated; these

meetings were not appreciated too highly, as the sequel developed, inasmuch as they disabused the minds of the Baptist ministry in the Mahoning Association of much prejudice and prepared the way for a very great change of views and practice.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Alexander Campbell, "The School of Preachers," M.H., Vol. VII, No. I (January, 1836), p. 46.

<sup>34</sup>Alexander Campbell's reply to M. Garnett, "Extremes," M. H., Vol. VII, No. VI (June, 1836), p. 245.

<sup>35</sup>Campbell, "Anecdotes," ibid., p. 524.

Campbell's mark began to show in the preachers of the Church of Christ; but, did it continue long and still remain to this day? While there are entrenched differences in the twentieth century groupings of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches and Churches of Christ that all claim rootage in the nineteenth century reformation; there is a decided similarity in the sermons preached. As William B. Blakemore, Jr. noted in an article for The Christian Evangelist,<sup>36</sup> the late "conservative" P. H. Welshimer and the late "liberal" Edward Scribner Ames both preached in Campbellian style. Each approached the Scripture with historic consciousness; each avoided sentimentalism and emotionalism; each revealed well-systematized thought; and each moved from establishing propositions to calling for action based on conviction.

Today, while there are variations within each of these popular groupings, we may observe that the present-day Disciples of Christ appear to be moving in some areas from Campbell in the realm of preaching. Some among them would tend to see more social implications in the four Gospels than he saw, and would consider preaching social concerns the legitimate and necessary work of today's

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<sup>36</sup>"Welshimer and Ames: A Comparison," Vol. LXXXII, No. 46 (November 15, 1944), p. 1101.



pulpit.<sup>37</sup> Some among them would "not readily agree that its (the New Testament's) specific admonitions are to be specifically obeyed as the voice of God," or that they should consider themselves "reformers" rather than "churchmen," or that they should "launch out without regard to the past in the same way that Campbell did."<sup>38</sup> If Campbell were to return he might wonder if the eldership had not surrendered its teaching responsibility; and he would question the garb the preachers wore, the clerical position they assumed and the titles by which they were called.

Christians from independent Christian Churches in this day assemble at such gatherings as the North American Christian Convention which is known as a "preaching" convention in distinction from a business convention. While many of the messages they hear have Campbellian traits, there occasionally is revealed a use of anecdote, jest, or manuscript reading not in harmony with Campbell's opinions regarding teaching. These speakers are usually schooled in Bible Colleges rather than in Liberal Art schools where the Bible is the central text. The preachers possibly

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<sup>37</sup>Granville T. Walker, Preaching in the Thought of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1954), p. 121.

<sup>38</sup>Stephen J. England, "Alexander Campbell's Views on Baptism in the Light of the Ecumenical Movement," in Perry Epler Gresham, The Sage of Bethany: A Pioneer in Broadcloth (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960), pp. 108-109.

have given more attention to oratorical skills than Campbell thought wise and occasionally have used texts in a way reminiscent of the "scrap preaching" or "proof-texting" to which Campbell objected. If Campbell "dropped in" to such a convention he would doubtless ask where were the elite minds, the visiting denominational clergy or the interested skeptics that used to be found in his meetings. Most of all he might be inquisitive to know why a Bible people did not find it helpful to hear preaching with the Bible open before each hearer.

Even among the most conservative of all these segments that look back to Campbell, the Churches of Christ have congregations where a clergyman exists in fact while denied still in theory. On a Sunday morning when Christians are gathered to remember the Christ who purchased their salvation, they are apt to hear a sermon "preached" to them, as if they were the world in need of conversion rather than the saints in need of edification that comes through teaching. By asking around it might be learned that the members had not studied the Scriptures at home in preparation for the discourse. By looking around it might be noted that the speaker is not concluding his message with dialogue nor addressing (even at a Christian college lectureship) the inclusive crowd of sectarian Christians that Campbell hoped to reach with his principles of reform.

By these random examples we are attempting to suggest that in those religious bodies where Campbell's name is still heard, there is some evidence of his impact still abiding but at the same time a clear indication that his insights are being lost, forgotten or rejected.

The articles he wrote on preaching are not easily available, but are to be found only in a few libraries. The sermons he preached have, but for a few exceptions, been unrecorded for posterity. It is time for every "Christian only," as well as every preacher and teacher among them, to ask afresh: Are the principles of union and reform he proposed valid? Does the church today want or need preaching as he conceived it? Where is there in all the millions who count themselves members of the Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches or Churches of Christ one modern voice that holds sway among the masses and the intellectuals as did the voice of Alexander Campbell?

Campbell was convinced that all church reformation would need to begin with those who took the position of preachers and teachers of the Word. In expounding the faith, hope, and love of Paul's I Corinthians 13:13, Campbell wrote:

A reformation in pulpit oratory must antedate any true or real reformation in the church going community, as respects its edification and piety.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Alexander Campbell, "Faith, Hope, Love," M. H., Vol. I, No. V (May, 1858), p. 282.

Those words have profound relevance and suggestive guidance for all who desire Christians to be one in Christ so that the world can be won to Christ. If Alexander Campbell was right in his claim that the shortest route to a unity that is lasting and Christian is a return to the faith and practice of apostolic times, it is imperative that preachers and teachers of Christ reform their preaching by New Testament standards and become preachers of reform bringing renewal to the church and the world.

## CONCLUSION

We have been viewing the life of a man who held some distinctive ideas about preaching and who used preaching as a means of creating the Christian fellowship he had read about in the New Testament Scriptures. Neither the revivalistic preaching that abandoned reason nor the denominational proclamation of party opinion was the need of the hour. The world would never be informed of God's wondrous plan for its salvation by messengers that took the scrap of a text out of its context and shouted for an hour on their experiences or strung out anecdotes about the experiences of others. In the preaching described in the New Testament, proclaiming the news about Christ, with accompanying promises, commands and warnings was quite otherwise; but for serious churchmen it ought to be accepted as normative.

Bible Christians would soon find the Holy Spirit had used in the written Word of God precise words to define the work of specified functionaries. Preaching was the evangelists work to convert the world, establish churches and set

things in order. Teaching was the ministry of local church elders so that all new converts having been brought into the school of Christ by baptism might be taught to observe all that Jesus had commanded His followers.

Those who labored as teachers or preachers of Christ in every place throughout Christian history were called by their congregation to that humble ministry because of their observed capabilities. They were not to do all the work but to train all members for their varied ministries. Each such man pressed into the work of the pulpit was not to expect the kind of call an apostle of Christ received; but he was expected to live the kind of life the apostles exemplified--lives of modesty, prayerful earnestness, dignity, purity, and loving wisdom.

The audience a speaker addressed was to be made to think. The spokesman for the church was to bring a message from the mind of God to the mind of man. God had so made man that the faith in Christ which He desired could be produced in man by the evidence He provided in the Apostolic witness. Hence, he that would make believers must not waste his time telling of his religious or political opinions, his orthodoxy or heterodoxy; but he must state, establish and illustrate what God had done in Christ. He that would edify believers would wisely limit his terminology to Biblical words, while giving Biblical scope and dimension in every presentation in a way that

is true to the Biblical context. The sermons exemplified in the Bible were extemporaneously delivered in a conversational style and had marks of dialogue.

Alexander Campbell tried to be that kind of preacher and teacher one reads about in the New Testament. With the encouragement of a godly wife, the Bible-memorizing habit of inspirational parents and the practice of personal discipline which made Campbell spend sixteen hours a day in his library, he became an expert in one book; while broadening travel, a liberal education and constant writing and editing kept that one book in its proper perspective. His ministry reveals the development of his concepts and the victories won in turning skeptics into Christians and narrow sectarians into catholic-minded Christians.

Campbell's theme was Christ and his basic interests were the church's unity and the world's salvation. His sermon texts were primarily from the New Testament but always illustrated from the wide range of biblical history. To hear him was to fill the mind with truths from history and nature that led to conviction regarding and commitment to the Truth.

Some in the nineteenth century thought too highly of Campbell, but all respected him for his Bible knowledge. At that time almost all Disciples sought to preach as he did. Today, however, while his brand is visible in congregations related to the Restoration Movement, no group in

the fellowship could claim to measure up fully to his ideal. Many would not be cognizant of that ideal. Some might not agree with it. Yet, those who rethink preaching in the light of Campbell's observations will be benefited.

Two relevant questions now press us. In the church of tomorrow can any of Campbell's insights be used to make the church come alive? What are the universals that worked for him as a preacher that will work for any gospel proclaimer or church reformer that uses them now?

Renewal, like faith, comes from hearing the Word of God. The reform Campbell preached, like all church reforms before and since, grew out of a serious searching of the Scriptures. The will of God was sought in that source. What is the "gospel?" What is the meaning of the order to "preach" it? How was that gospel communicated by the early church? Such questions called for a wrestling of the modern mind with the ancient texts.

Like both renewal and faith, Christian oneness comes from hearing afresh the Word of God. In the document of Scripture is to be found the unity Christ seeks for His church, the way of its attainment and the creation of that spirit necessary to its manifestation. There must be a norm for the unity of Christians and it must be as old as Christ's apostles. The church must return to faith in and obedience to Christ as the single bond of that unity. The atmosphere conducive to ecumenical attainment must be



that of love and freedom. Lasting unity must guarantee the integrity of the individual and grant to him as a believer in the Lordship of Christ the right to think for himself. The free individual and the free congregation spontaneously cooperating out of love for Christ, his will and his people is the unity desired.

The effective preaching method of Campbell that will bear fruit for today's ministers of the Word is based on the rights of the congregation as a school of Christ. An assembly of Christians has the right to expect to hear that which is relevant to their lives. As disciples of Christ they have the right to expect to hear the gospel of Christ and not the discipline of another teacher. As students of the "master teacher" they have the right to expect in the passing of time, with their cooperative effort, to become educated from the pulpit in the subjects of the Scripture. The teachers of the Word are to defend and stimulate the student body to think for itself and to ask questions and share in dialogue on the teachings of Jesus. The preacher or teacher must establish a vital proposition with evidence and logic and by persuasion gain the desired response in life. The extemporaneous style and natural manner of a well-educated minister in history, literary arts and Bible will be productive of good. Great preaching results when, as with Campbell, Christ is the theme, charity the tone, clarity the route and certainty the foundation. In a world of human doubts the church bears the message of divine assurance.

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